

Netanyahu, Arafat to meet with EU presidency in Luxembourg

BRUSSELS (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will travel to Luxembourg Thursday and Friday to meet with the EU presidency, officials here said. Mr. Netanyahu is to hold talks Thursday with Luxembourg's Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker and Foreign Minister Jacques Poos. Luxembourg currently heads the rotating European Union presidency. President Arafat is to meet with both men on Friday. Talks are not scheduled between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu.

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Prince Hassan, Sheikh Hamad agree on increasing Jordanian labour in Qatar

Jordan, Qatar stress need to end suffering of Iraqi people

From Alia Toukan in Doha

HIS ROYAL Highness Crown Prince Hassan and Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani held talks in Doha Tuesday agreeing to further open the Qatari market to Jordanian labour, and to fully coordinate their positions ahead of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) foreign ministerial meeting to be held here next month, said a source close to the Jordanian delegation attending the talks.

"We are in need of bringing the region closer

together, and also bringing together resources in the energy, water, environment and human sectors," Crown Prince Hassan told the press ahead of his meeting with Sheikh Hamad, adding that the talks must be viewed in the context of the excellent relations between Jordan and Qatar.

In what was described as "frank, detailed and open discussions," Crown Prince Hassan and Sheikh Hamad reviewed recent developments in the region, the situation in Iraq with both sides emphasising "the need to end the

suffering of the Iraqi people" and especially the stalled Arab-Israeli peace process, said the source.

"Both sides stressed the need to overcome all obstacles facing the peace process in order to achieve a comprehensive and lasting peace, which guarantees the rights of all on the basis of international legitimacy," said the source.

He added that "the Crown Prince and Sheikh Hamad reiterated their unwavering support for the Palestinian people in their efforts to realise their legitimate rights and establish their independent state on

their national soil."

Crown Prince Hassan, who was accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh and Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs and Minister of State for Prime Ministry Affairs Jawad Anani, also reviewed the details of the eighth Islamic summit which ended in Tehran Thursday, and stressed the need to follow up on specific issues addressed by the Crown Prince during the summit, specifically a code of conduct for the Muslim World, and a conflict resolution centre.

The two sides agreed to

fully coordinate their positions on these issues ahead of the foreign ministerial meeting of member states of the OIC.

On the bilateral level, agreement was reached to further open the Qatari market "in all areas" to Jordanian labour, to increase Qatari investment in Jordan, to enhance economic and trade cooperation between the two sides, and to begin studies for joint projects in Jordanian industrial and financial sectors.



PM RECEIVES FARRAKHAN: Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali receives Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan in Amman Tuesday. Farrakhan is on a 52-nation tour including Iraq, Libya, Egypt and Israel (see story on page 3) (photo by Yousef Allan)

Israel could give up third of W. Bank settlements — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Nearly a third of Jewish settlements in the West Bank would be placed in areas under Palestinian rule if Israel adopts a final peace proposal drawn up by Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, it was reported Tuesday.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu "is leaning towards" Mr. Mordechai's outline for a final peace agreement with the Palestinians, the Haaretz newspaper said, but settlers and other far-right nationalists were already threatening Tuesday to topple the government if the plan goes ahead.

Mr. Mordechai confirmed the principles of the "final status" plan reported by Haaretz during a visit Monday to the settlement of Ariel in the centre of the West Bank.

"It is possible that a certain number of settlements will be affected by the next withdrawal of our troops," he said.

According to Haaretz, Mr. Mordechai's proposal for a final peace agreement with the Palestinians would leave 52.2 per cent of the West Bank under Israeli control in the form of "security zones."

But 42 of the 144 settlements in the territory would fall into areas transferred to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), although they would be given an extra-

territorial status, it said.

These 42 would include some particularly militant settlements, such as Kiryat Arba near Hebron, which has a population of 6,000, Beit El near Ramallah (3,000 residents) and Kadumim west of Nablus (5,000), it said.

In all, 150,000 Jewish settlers currently live in the West Bank, not counting the 170,000 Israelis who have moved into occupied Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Mordechai's plan was drawn up according to "security interests" determined by senior army planners and he is scheduled to defend the proposal at a special cabinet session scheduled for Tuesday evening, officials said.

A rival plan drawn up by the headline infrastructure minister, Ariel Sharon, and based on his views of Israel's "national interests" would give Palestinians control over barely 30 per cent of the West Bank.

The PNA currently has exclusive control over only three per cent of the West Bank — eight main towns — and civilian jurisdiction over another 27 per cent where the Israeli army maintains security. The PNA also controls 60 per cent of the Gaza Strip.

The cabinet began debating the "final status" plans as part of deliberations on an interim troop withdrawal Israel is required to make

Israel-U.S. reach secret accord on retreat — TV

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and the United States secretly agreed on the extent of the coming Israeli military pullback from the West Bank and on how to implement it, Israeli public television reported Tuesday.

Israel would announce in January a phased withdrawal of more than 10 per cent of the territory under its exclusive control, which would become part of the Palestinian autonomous area.

The United States would then work to get the Palestinians to agree to the retreat. Washington is also expected to organise a meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, to kick off the negotiations on the final status of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab east Jerusalem.

Public television said the scenario was

developed during contacts between Netanyahu and U.S. special envoy for the Middle East Dennis Ross.

However, Mr. Netanyahu denied Tuesday during an extraordinary cabinet meeting that such an agreement has been struck, an official said.

Meanwhile, Faisal Husseini, the top PLO official in Jerusalem, told reporters Tuesday that the next Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank must provide the Palestinians with land connecting the various islands of territory already under their control.

"It is not only important the scope of the withdrawal from West Bank, but also the quality of the withdrawal," Mr. Husseini said.

"The Palestinian Authority can not accept a withdrawal that will allow only isolated islands of land controlled by the Palestinians,"

from the West Bank under previously signed accords.

Ministers argue that they cannot decide what territory to hand over now until they have agreed on which land Israel will be unwilling to give up even under a final peace settlement.

The cabinet has been rushing to define its priorities before Mr. Netanyahu meets Thursday in Paris with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright — who has been pushing hard for a rapid and "significant" troop pullback as a sign of Israel's good faith intentions in the peace process.

Mr. Netanyahu said Monday that he would not have an interim pullback proposal ready to present to Ms. Albright.

The Maariv newspaper reported Tuesday that a U.S. general who serves as one of Ms. Albright's security advisors recently visited Israel to assess the validity of Israel's security concerns related to further troop withdrawals.

Settler leaders and far-right nationalists meanwhile geared up to resist U.S. pressure for widespread land concessions.

Menahem Guray, a settler leader, rejected the notion of any settlements being cut off from Israeli jurisdiction.

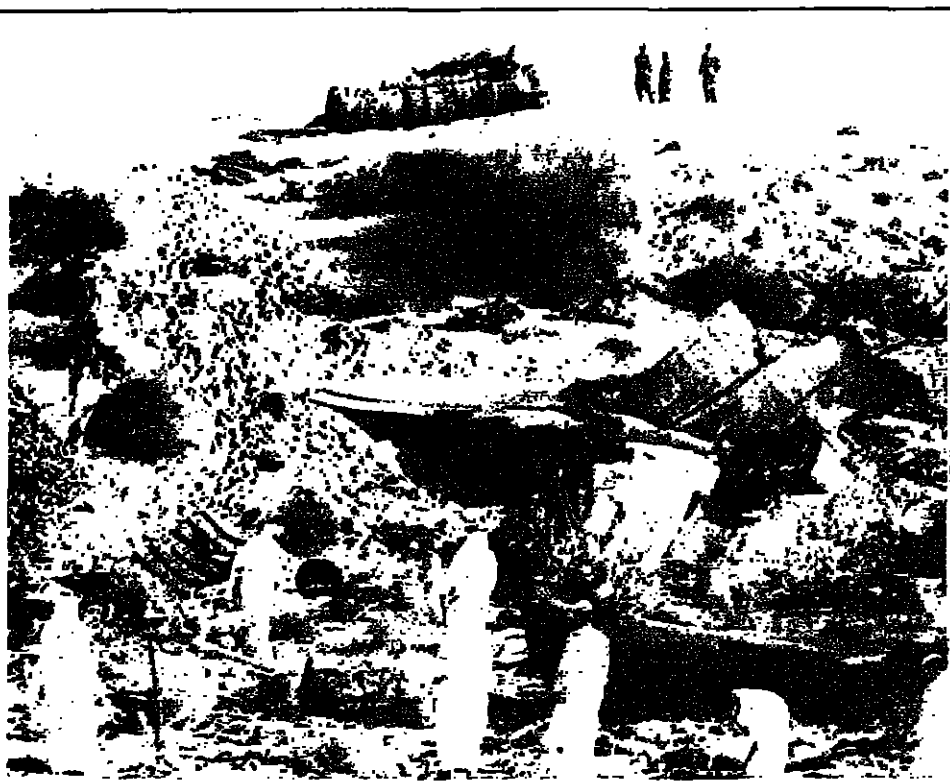
"We don't accept the idea of extra-territoriality," he told AFP.

Former prime minister Yitzhak Shamir called on settlers "to be stronger than ever" in opposing further land transfers.

And nationalist deputies from Mr. Netanyahu's fragile coalition claimed they had enough votes to topple the government if it abandoned any settlements.

The so-called Greater Israel Front in parliament said it already had 12 deputies willing to back a motion of no confidence if Mr. Netanyahu approves any further transfer of land to Palestinian rule.

Mr. Netanyahu's coalition has a 66-54 majority in parliament.



UAE PLANE CRASH: The crash site Tuesday of a charter flight in Sharjah, the United Arab Emirates Monday. The Tu-154 airliner of the Tajik government airline Tajikavia, was carrying 77 passengers and nine crew members and was en route from Tajikistan to Sharjah, when the crash occurred. Only one man survived (see story on page 12) (AP photo)

Arab parliamentarians to meet in Luxor

TRIPOLI (AFP) — The Union of Arab Parliaments (UPA) has decided to hold a special meeting in January in the southern Egyptian tourist resort of Luxor where Islamists last month killed 62 people, the official JANA news agency reported on Tuesday. The meeting will be aimed at "expressing the solidarity of Arab parliamentarians with Egypt in its struggle against

terrorism," JANA said. Fifty-eight foreign tourists and four Egyptians were killed in the Nov. 17 massacre. The theme of the Jan. 14 meeting will be "terrorism: an obstacle to development and democracy," JANA said, quoting a statement ending a two-day UPA meeting. The UPA talks which ended Monday were held in the Libyan coastal city of Sirte as a "sign of solidarity with

Libya" which is facing a U.N. air and arms embargo since 1992. In their final declaration, UPA members urged Arab governments "to take practical steps to remove these sanctions, collectively and immediately." The Arab League, African, Islamic and non-aligned countries back a compromise proposed by Tripoli to try the two Libyan suspects in a neutral country.

Mutawi says Iraq has executed another Jordanian for murder; Iraqi envoy in Amman denies charges

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Iraq has executed a Jordanian man for murdering an Egyptian in 1994, raising to five the number of Jordanians put to death in Iraq in less than two weeks, officials said on Tuesday.

Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi told reporters that Mohammed Ali Mohammed Al Sabah was executed in Baghdad on Dec. 10.

But Iraq's ambassador to Jordan Nouri Al Weiss denied that Baghdad executed a fifth Jordanian saying that "the information is totally without foundation," Agence France Press reported.

"Information available to the ministry of foreign affairs indicated that Mr. Sabah was hanged to death, but nothing was received from the Iraqi authorities on that," Dr. Mutawi told reporters after the regular cabinet session.

He added that the Jordanian embassy in Baghdad was informed of the execution four days after it occurred.

The official news agency Pera later said that Mr. Sabah was executed "for taking part in killing an Egyptian citizen living in Iraq and was buried in Iraq without informing his relatives or the embassy," it said his Egyptian accomplice was also executed but gave no further details.

Iraq executed four Jordanians accused of smuggling car spare parts out of Baghdad on Dec. 8, dealing a hefty blow to bilateral ties. Amman retaliated, expelling seven Iraqi diplomats from Jordan and recalling its charges d'affaires in Baghdad, Adel Sweidan, for consultations.

His Majesty King Hussein and the government, reflecting feelings of popular outrage, used unusual harsh words to condemn the killings. The King even said that the Kingdom would not care if Iraq stopped supplies of 75,000 barrels of oil a day at reduced prices — all of Jordan's daily fuel needs.

Baghdad expressed astonishment over Jordan's reaction saying the executions were justified on grounds that eco-

nomic crimes are intolerable in a country suffering from seven years of U.N. imposed sanctions.

Mr. Weiss also told AFP he was optimistic that another Jordanian condemned to death for smuggling, Amar Ghalib Shehabeddine, will not be executed — after pleas by the King and the Cabinet.

Iraq's apparently took the decision not to execute Mr. Shehabeddine to prevent further deterioration in ties following the slayings. It also said on Sunday it would not stop sending oil to Jordan, its only reliable overland link with the world because of economic sanctions imposed after its August 1990 occupation of Kuwait.

Mr. Weiss said the Iraqi oil minister and Jordan's energy minister were due to meet in Baghdad next week for annual talks to renew the 1988 oil contract.

Diplomats and officials said they believed Amman and Baghdad were trying to prevent a further worsening of ties, which hit their lowest levels after King Hussein gave

asylum to top Iraqi defectors in 1995 and began calling for change in Iraq.

Baghdad was also trying to help release an unidentified number of Jordanians detained in Iraqi jails as part of a good-will gesture, officials said.

Dr. Mutawi said that Jordan's "strong reactions over the executions" were not part of a plan to escalate tension with Baghdad — a major market for Jordanian products.

"This criticism does not mean that Jordan wants to escalate the crisis with Iraq. We just wanted to express our denunciation of this crime," he added. Mr. Weiss appeared equally keen not to widen the rift and said Iraq wanted to maintain warm ties with Jordan, which was ostracised by the West for its perceived support for Iraq during the 1990-91 Gulf War.

"The road must be barred to all those who want to profit from this crisis and throw oil on fire," Mr. Weiss was quoted by AFP as saying. He added that "Iraq will act with deliber-

ation, without making an emotional reaction."

Unconfirmed reports in the local press said Jordan would send back Mr. Sweidan in two weeks.

Meanwhile, an Iraqi opposition group, which opened its offices in Amman almost two years ago at the height of tense Jordanian-Iraqi ties, said it had requested a meeting with speakers of the Lower and Upper Houses of Parliament to "express their condolences to the bereaved families of the executed Jordanians."

Mo'ad Abdul Raheem, politburo member of Al Wifaq Al Watani (national accord) group, told the Jordan Times the delegation will include party members and independent Iraqi personalities.

He said they expected to meet with Lower House Speaker Sa'ad Hayel Srour and Senate Speaker Zeid Al Rifai within 48 hours.

"We will express our denunciation to the crime and present our condolences to the families of those who were executed," Mr. Abdul Raheem said.

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U.S. envoy talks peace in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — Assistant U.S. Secretary of State Martin Indyk wrapped up a visit here Tuesday in which he said Washington hopes efforts to revive Palestinian-Israeli negotiations will pave the way for progress on the other peace tracks.

"We feel that at the moment what's important is to get the Palestinian track moving because that will make it easier to resume negotiations on other tracks," Mr. Indyk told reporters.

The U.S. diplomat, who arrived in Beirut Tuesday morning from Damascus, was due to leave Beirut in the evening for a destination which has not yet been announced.

"We had discussions with the Syrians, Israelis and now with the Lebanese government on how we can move forward on all tracks," Mr. Indyk said after meeting with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi and Foreign Minister Fares Bouez.

Mr. Indyk said the meeting covered "a range of topics concerning the U.S. and Lebanon, including the peace process and our efforts to try to move the Palestinian track forward."

"I assured [Hrawi] that we seek a comprehensive peace and that we intend to be actively engaged in trying to get the negotiations between Israel and Lebanon and Israel and Syria moving again as well," he added.

Later in the day, Mr. Indyk also met with the commander of the Lebanese army, Emile Lahud, Prime Minister Rafik Hariri and Parliamentary Speaker Nabih Berri.

He said that Mr. Berri informed him that municipal elections, the first in 30

years, are to take place next year, as are presidential elections. Mr. Indyk added that this was positive and important for Lebanon.

Mr. Indyk is the second senior U.S. official to visit Lebanon in three months.

On Sept. 15, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright made a brief stop in Beirut.

The United States lifted a 12-year-old ban on U.S. citizens travelling to Lebanon in July.

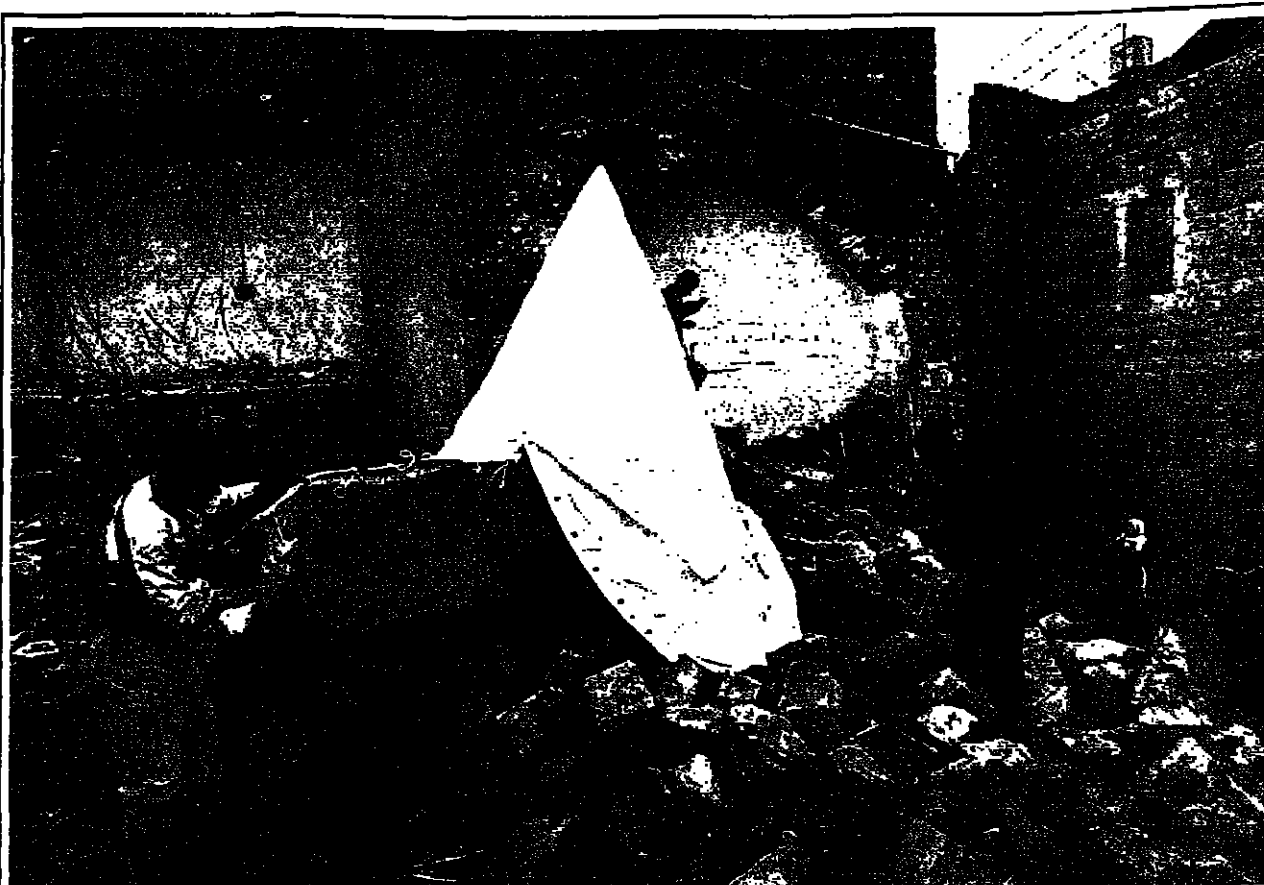
In Syria, Mr. Indyk held talks with President Hafez Al Assad on the prospects of re-starting peace negotiations with Israel that have been on ice for almost two years.

Peace talks between Israel and Syria have been stalled since a spate of suicide bombings by Islamists in Israel in February 1996, a year after Lebanese-Israeli peace talks ground to a halt.

A resumption of Lebanese-Israeli peace talks is tied to progress in the negotiations between Israel and Syria, the main power broker in Lebanon with 35,000 troops.

Mr. Indyk, formerly U.S. ambassador to Israel, is on his first tour of the region as assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs. Besides Syria and Lebanon, he has also visited Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories.

The U.S. State Department announced Monday that Mr. Indyk and U.S. mediator for the Middle East Dennis Ross, are to meet Ms. Albright in Thursday in Paris. Ms. Albright is to hold talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders Thursday to discuss planned Israeli troop withdrawals from the West Bank.



DEMOLISHED HOUSE: Members of the Shouli family pitch a tent Tuesday on the rubble of their home which was demolished Monday by the Israeli army. Israeli troops demolished two homes that allegedly belonged to Palestinian suicide bombers and sealed the homes of two others. This home, in the West Bank town of Asira Al Shamaliya, belonged to Youssef Shouli, 22, who the Israeli forensic experts identified at the end of September as one of the suicide bombers (Reuters photo)

Erekat holds talks with Kahalani on implementation of interim accords

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani met Tuesday with Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erekat to discuss the implementation of interim peace accords, officials said.

The two discussed the establishment of "safe passages" for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza Strip that are called for in the peace agreements, Mr. Kahalani's office said. No breakthrough was reported.

Mr. Kahalani and Mr.

Erekat also spoke, along with Palestinian police chiefs, about cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian security forces to crack down on car theft in Israel, Israeli radio reported.

An epidemic of car thefts in Israel has hit new highs, with some 41,335 cars reported stolen between January and November this year, up 25 per cent from the same period last year.

Israeli police officials say most of the cars end up in self-rule areas of the West

Bank and Mr. Kahalani has demanded the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) launch an offensive against car thieves.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on implementing interim peace agreements have been put on a back-burner pending Israeli deliberations on a new troop withdrawal from the West Bank required by the accords.

Two pullbacks should have occurred this year but were frozen by Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

His government last month agreed to make a conditional offer of one troop pullback but did not decide on the scope or timing of the withdrawal.

The cabinet pursued deliberations on these issues this week and Mr. Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat are due to discuss the issue separately in Europe on Thursday with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Israeli, Palestinian wives renew court battle over dead husband

TEL AVIV (AFP) — A Jewish Israeli woman reneged on an agreement Tuesday with a Palestinian Muslim over the burial of the man they had both wed, preventing his funeral two weeks after his death, judicial officials said.

Shawkat Aref Quazza was born to a Muslim family in Arab east Jerusalem but after living for 30 years with an Israeli Jew he converted to Judaism and married the woman, Jacqueline Ben Avraham.

The couple separated shortly after the marriage and Quazza went back to Islam and married a Muslim woman from Hebron. Hiyam Al Hujjah.

After Quazza's death at the age of 56, the two wives

battled over whether he would be buried in a Jewish or Muslim cemetery.

The argument reached Israel's supreme court but before it could issue a ruling, the women reached a compromise agreement that he be buried Tuesday in a Muslim cemetery plot located adjacent to a Jewish burial ground in the northern city of Haifa.

But Ms. Ben Avraham backed down on the agreement at the last minute, demanding that Quazza be buried in the Jewish part of cemetery and that she be granted a greater chunk of his possessions, said Abraham Bardugo. Ms. Hujjah's attorney.

"After we agreed to all their demands for much of

his property just so we could bury him as a Muslim because he was a Muslim, they reneged on the agreement and decided to fight for everything, for all the property and the burial rights," Mr. Bardugo told Israeli Radio.

The matter was brought to the supreme court once again on Tuesday. But the court sent the two women back to work out an amicable arrangement within 48 hours or face a court-imposed ruling.

"We will give up everything just so he will be buried as he died and as he was born, as a Muslim," Mr. Bardugo said.

In the meantime, the body of Quazza was in a mortuary in Tel Aviv.

Bahrain emir looks for wider popular participation in consultative council

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain's Emir Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa on Tuesday said he was looking to widen popular participation in the Gulf Arab state's consultative council.

Sheikh Isa said in a speech marking Bahrain's 26th National Day that he was satisfied with the results of last year's Shura Council expansion and the scope of dialogue which took place in the 40-member consultative body.

"We shall always be seeking and hoping to enrich this experiment during the next stages through further participation of various sectors of the community," the emir said in his address, carried by the official media.

He said this exchange of views between the state and its people was aimed at achieving "comprehensive national unity."

Bahrain, the Gulf's main banking centre, has been hit by a wave of sporadic anti-government protests by members of the majority Shiite Muslim community since December 1994.

The restoration of an elected parliament, dissolved by the government in 1975, is one of the protesters' demands.

In September 1996, Sheikh Isa expanded the Shura Council to 40 members from 30, widening popular representation.

The council gives its view on laws drafted by Bahrain's cabinet before

they are sent to the emir for final approval.

In his speech, Sheikh Isa also said the long-term goal was to bring prosperity to all Bahrainis, particularly those with limited incomes.

"It is our belief that whatever economic prosperity we achieve, we cannot describe it as real and complete unless it covers the whole nation and the citizens in all," he said.

"We shall have no peace of mind unless we achieve, together and through joint efforts, such a noble and national goal," the emir said.

Demands for more jobs and higher income have also been behind the sporadic civil unrest.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq suspects U.N. in escape of Danish guard

BAGHDAD (AFP) — An official Iraqi newspaper on Tuesday pointed a finger of blame at the United Nations for the escape of a Danish U.N. guard under house arrest for a fatal road accident. "Instead of him being handed over for trial by Iraqi authorities, he fled illegally under conditions which raise doubts of U.N. implication in this operation," said Babel, run by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday. "The credibility of the United Nations is being tested again after the guard's escape from Iraq that has caused a scandal for the international organisation," it said. "We are confronted by an affair which borders on the scandalous and confirms all that we have said about violations by certain U.N. employees... of Iraq's laws and sovereignty to serve the interests of the United States," said Babel. Denmark on Monday turned down an Iraqi request for Torben Lund, a guard for the U.N. humanitarian programme in Iraq, to be extradited. But it has criticised the guard's escape.

Egypt seeks normalisation with Sudan, Iran

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Tuesday called for a rapid improvement of ties with Khartoum in the latest sign that Cairo wants to shore up its relations with regional "black sheep" Sudan and Iran. "We hope to restore normal relations with Sudan and the quicker the better," President Mubarak told reporters during a visit to Al Obur industrial city north of Cairo. But the president declined to confirm government press reports suggesting an imminent visit to Cairo of Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. Al-Bashir reported that Sudanese Minister of State Mustafa Osman Ismail was expected Tuesday in Cairo to prepare a visit by President Bashir, who last visited Egypt in 1996 to attend an Arab summit.

Arrest of Iranian opposition leader confirmed

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's official IRNA news agency confirmed on Tuesday that Ibrahim Yazdi, head of the country's leading liberal opposition movement, has been arrested. Mr. Yazdi, secretary general of the Movement for the Liberation of Iran (MLI), was arrested on Sunday, the news agency said. It did not give any reason for his arrest but said he was "brought before a court and placed in detention." "No further information was available on the legal actions taken against Ibrahim Yazdi," IRNA said. Mr. Yazdi, 65, was foreign minister in the government of Prime Minister Mehdi Bazargan set up after the overthrow of the Shah in 1979. His arrest was announced by the MLI on Monday.

Body of Saudi diplomat flown home

RIYADH (AP) — A private plane ordered by Saudi Arabia's King Fahd has brought back the body of a Saudi diplomat killed in the former Soviet republic of Kazakhstan, an official said Tuesday. The plane returned Monday with the body of Ahmad Ben Awdah, 39, who had started work four months ago as second secretary at the Saudi embassy in the Kazakh capital of Alma Aty. He was stabbed to death Wednesday in his house by a gang of robbers who stole all furniture and electronic goods, said the foreign ministry official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Settler leader convicted for disturbing the peace

TEL AVIV (AP) — The founder of the West Bank Settler Movement, Moshe Levinger, was sentenced to six months in jail for assault and disturbing the peace three years ago in Hebron, a court official said Monday. The Jerusalem magistrate's court sentenced Levinger on Sunday and fined him \$2300 as part of a plea bargain, said court spokesman, Moshe Goral. Among other charges, Levinger was convicted of disturbing Muslim prayers at Hebron's Tomb of the Patriarchs three years ago and for blocking an army commander from entering the nearby Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba. In 1994, Levinger served 3-1/2 months of a five-month term for killing an Arab shopkeeper in Hebron during a 1988 stone-throwing incident. The next year, he received a four-month sentence for assaulting an Arab family and insulting an Israeli soldier.

Pro-Aoun demonstrators freed

BEIRUT (AFP) — Thirty-three supporters of exiled Lebanese General Michel Aoun, who were arrested during a demonstration here over the weekend, were freed on Tuesday, judicial sources said. Ten of the Aoun supporters who had been referred to a military court were released at 12:00 p.m. local time, two hours after the 23 others handed over to a civil court had been set free, the sources said. A government source told AFP that Prime Minister Rafik Hariri had personally sought "to appease the heated atmosphere in the country" over the arrests. On Monday, the authorities released 30 of the total 63 Aoun supporters arrested Sunday during a demonstration against a government ban on the live broadcast of a television interview with General Aoun from Paris, where he has lived in exile since 1991.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10Jonny Quest
14:30Art Box
15:00Spell Binder
15:30Monsters Today
16:00Border Town
16:30Neighbours
17:00French Programmes
19:00News in French
19:30News Headlines
19:35Doc. — High Tech Culture
20:00Step By Step
20:30Challenges
21:10Kung Fu
22:00News in English
22:30Land's End
23:15The Ginger

PRAYER TIMES

05:02Fajr
06:24Sunrise/Duha
11:32Dhuhr
14:16Asr
16:39Maghreb
18:01Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Saffeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632783
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Deserts.....05/12	Rescue 630341	813813/32	FOR THE TRAVELLER	09:30Al 'Arish (PF)	20:30Bombay (RJ)
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366	Jordan Valley10/18	Civil Defence Emergency 199	Khalidi Maternity. 644281/6	QUEEN ALIA	10:15 Doha, Al Hudaidah (LY)	20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ)
Anglican Church Tel. 652826	Yesterday's high temperatures:	Rescue Police 192, 621111.	Akileh Maternity. 642441/2	INTERNATIONAL	10:30Jeddah (SV)	20:10Cairo (RJ)
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331	Amman 10, Aqaba 21 Humid-	637777	Jabal Amman Maternity	AIRPORT	10:50Kuwait (KU)	20:30New Delhi (RJ)
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261	ity readings: Amman 96 per	Fire Brigade617101	642362	This information is supplied	13:10Tunis (TU)	20:45Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751	cent. Aqaba 38 per cent.	Blood Bank775121	Malhas, J. Amman636140	by Royal Jordanian (RJ) infor-	13:25 Doha, Abu Dhabi (GF)	21:00Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
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Church Tel. 865897	to the supreme court once	Traffic Police896390	Shmeisani Hospital 669131	Queen Alia International Air-	14:30Doha (QR)	Other Flights
Evangelical Lutheran	again on Tuesday. But the	Public Security Department	University Hospital 845845	port Tel. (08153200) where it	15:05Vienna (OS)	00:35Amsterdam (KL)
Church Tel. 824328.	court sent the two women	630321	Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9	should always be verified.	15:30Algiers (AH)	01:55Bucharest (RO)
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Congregation Tel. 688404	ment at the last minute,	Price Complaints661176	Al-Abli, Abdali664164/6	are supplied on phone 08	20:10Beirut (ME)	08:00Beirut (ME)
The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932	demanding that Quazza be	Water and Sewerage Com-	Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3	(52700) or 08(53250).	21:10Paris, Damascus (AF)	08:25London (BA)
Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691	buried in the Jewish part of	plaints.....897467	Al-Bashir,775111/26		22:30Athens (OA)	10:30Cairo (MS)
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Princess Basma urges women to begin planning for next parliamentary elections

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — HRH Princess Basma Tuesday urged Jordanian women to begin planning for next parliamentary elections, which are scheduled for next year.

"We should not be frustrated by the results, but rather it is the duty of everybody to study the past, and plan for the future," said Princess Basma, one of the country's key female leaders, at the start of a three-day workshop analysing election results.

Many of the over 200 male and female activists attending the workshop, entitled "Lessons Learned and Future Plans," said preparation to boost women's participation in Jordan's political life and future elections should start from now.

"I met with several women's groups and individuals and I sensed a strong determination to overcome all obstacles and a willingness to work together to achieve their ambitions," Princess Basma said at the workshop, organised by the Princess Basma Women's Centre (PBWC).

Seventeen women candidates, including Jordan's first and only woman member of Parliament, faced over 600 men in the

parliamentary elections and failed to win a single seat.

Two of the most prominent women candidates have accused rivals of rigging the election and buying votes — a charge denied by the government. "We should not blame each other for these results, but rather we should be realistic, because women's success in these field will not be achieved in one night. We should start acting now because we have a long way ahead of us," Princess Basma stressed.

Many women said they faced discriminatory laws, which would remain unchanged by the all-male Parliament dominated by conservative tribal leaders and pro-government figures.

Many have said the electoral system needs to be altered to help women, possibly through a parliamentary quota like the one enjoyed by Jordan's minority Christian and Circassian communities.

Sociologists and researchers have blamed the one-person, one-vote system, tribalism, discrimination, and financial constraints as other factors working against the victory of women in the elections.

Farah Daghestani, director of the PBWC, said the elections results should "push us to reconsider the women's movement in Jordan."

"We should think about and seriously plan the steps we need to take, especially after women candidates and women's organisations and groups are questioning the disappointing results and trying to figure out the reasons," Ms. Daghestani said.

"We decided to conduct this workshop to form future guidelines for everybody to support the qualified women," she explained.

During Tuesday's session, researchers and journalists said the large number of women candidates running and strong social traditions were key reasons for their failure in the race.

Many females followed the preferences of their husbands, fathers, or brothers in choosing candidates to avoid angry reactions.

"We should educate men about the importance of women's participation in politics," said Tareq Masarweh, a leading columnist.

He also said women should adopt female issues once they reached the Lower House and other official centres of power.

"We only had one woman (Toujan Faisal) in Parliament, but she did not present any programme to amend the injustices against women," Mr. Masarweh said.

Nabil Sharif, deputy editor of the Arabic daily Al-Dustour, blamed the fail-

ure on the large number of women running in the same districts.

"Women candidates should have united their efforts, and should have run in the districts where they were certain that they would have a higher chance of winning," Dr. Sharif explained.

The four key lecturers, excluding Mr. Masarweh, said they were in favour of a temporary quota for women in the next Parliament.

"Men in the society are schizophrenic," said Nitham Assaf, head of Al-Riyadah Centre for Research and Information.

"Outside of the home, they call for women liberation but inside, they do something else and exercise their authority over women," he said.

Tony Sabbagh, a leading public opinion researcher and director of the Middle East Studies and Research Centre, said: "One of the main reasons for the failure is that women gave their votes to men."

Participants were divided into four groups, representing women candidates, the media, a group tackling draft legislation, and pressure groups.

These groups will study the obstacles facing women and will draft new laws and strategies in preparation for the next parliamentary elections.

Prime minister briefs Nation of Islam leader Farrakhan on peace process

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The visiting American Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan Tuesday met with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who briefed him on Jordan's efforts to bring the peace process back on track.

"It was a very good meeting with His Excellency the Prime Minister. He gave us very important background information on the peace process and the strategies implemented," Mr. Farrakhan told reporters following the meeting.

Mr. Farrakhan, currently on a 54-state "tour for peace," arrived here Mon-

day for a several-day visit, during which he is expected to meet with religious and political figures in the country.

The black leader said he cancelled a planned visit to Al Aqsa Mosque in Arab east Jerusalem after he received threats from a right-wing Jewish group.

The Israeli government has lashed out at Mr. Farrakhan for his alleged "anti-Semitic" statements which were directed against Jews and Israel.

"The peace process can work," said Mr. Farrakhan, "but we always must be mindful that the pain and suffering can only be endured for so long before

there is a reaction from those who suffer.

"Sometimes a pregnant woman under the pain of childbirth wishes to die. The Holy Quran teaches us that persecution is worse than slaughter and the persecution that the Palestinians are living under is worse than slaughter," he added.

"Time is running out on the peace process. So we would urge those who recognise human suffering to do all they can to relieve that suffering of the Palestinian people so that the peace process may prevail," he stated.

After his visit here, the Nation of Islam leader is expected to leave for Cairo,

where he will meet with Al Azhar Grand Sheikh Mohammed Sa'id Tantawi and deliver what he described as a "message of peace."

The U.S. had asked Mr. Farrakhan to refrain from visiting what it describes as "rogue states," a term that the U.S. administration uses to describe Iran, Iraq, Libya, Cuba, Syria, North Korea, and Sudan.

Mr. Farrakhan Monday said he plans to visit these countries.

He has already visited Iraq, Iran, and the Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, where he met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

Majali asks Cabinet to review deputies' demands, statements

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Tuesday instructed the Cabinet to consider the demands and the remarks made by deputies during their debate of the government's policy statement and possible ways of implementing them.

Fifty-five of 79 deputies delivered speeches in Parliament over the past two days, presenting their views on domestic and external issues and making demands for improvement of services in

their respective districts.

A total of 51 deputies cast a vote of confidence in the government, while 15 deputies voted against it and 12 abstained.

The Cabinet listened to a report by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh on the outcome of the government's talks with Martin Indyk, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for North Africa and Middle East Affairs, on efforts to give impetus to the peace process.

The Cabinet also listened

to a briefing by Minister of Labour Saleh Khasawneh on Jordan's participation in the Asian regional labour conference held in Bangkok, during which Jordan's delegate was elected vice president of the conference.

Dr. Khasawneh, who led the Jordanian delegation, said the economic situation in southeast Asia, problems of poverty and unemployment, and personnel training were discussed at the conference.

The Cabinet formed Jor-

dan's delegation to the 15th Arab interior ministers council meeting, due to open in Tunis on Jan. 4. The delegation to the two-day meeting will be led by Minister of Interior Nahir Rashid.

The Cabinet endorsed an amended agreement on rescheduling a \$134 million payment due for a number of Airbus 310 planes and authorised Minister of Finance Suleiman Hafez to sign the agreement on behalf of the government.



UNIVERSITY OPENS FRENCH DEPARTMENT: Dean of the Faculty of Arts at the University of Jordan Abdul Rahman Shahin (right) Tuesday addresses a special ceremony to announce the official opening of the French language and literature department at the university. The opening ceremony was attended by University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh, French Ambassador to Jordan Bernard Bajolet, and the university Vice President for the Humanities Faculty Affairs Sami Khasawneh (left to right). Mr. Bajolet said the opening of the French department reflects the unique relations between Jordan and France. (Photo by Issam Abdul Rahim)

Rain, drop in temperature forecast for next three days

AMMAN (Petra) — The Meteorology Department Tuesday forecast more rain, mostly in the northern and central regions, and a noticeable drop in temperatures over the next three days.

In its forecast for Wednesday, the department said temperatures

will continue to gradually drop, reaching a maximum of 10 degrees Celsius during the day and dropping to 5 degree C at night in the Amman area, with rain falling in most regions.

On Thursday temperatures will be the same, with expected scattered

showers. On Friday there will be a further drop in temperatures, reaching a maximum of 8 degree C during the day, with heavier rains due to a cold front located over Greece and Turkey that is affecting the eastern regions of the Mediterranean.

Officer testifies in trial of two charged with double murder

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A police officer testifying in the trial of two men accused of the double murder of a man and his secretary in June 1997 Monday told the Criminal Court that one of the suspects was caught with two checks signed by the victim worth JD50,000.

Hani Fadi, 21, and his 19-year-old brother Hisham are both being tried for murdering Jubrael Iskandar, 63, and his secretary Fatimah Michael, 32, on June 11 in Mr. Iskandar's office.

"When I searched

Hisham, who was hiding in a hotel room in downtown Amman, I found two checks that belonged to the victim, one for the amount of JD20,000 and another for JD30,000," Sergeant Yousef Kisswani said.

The police officer told the court that he also found a document indicating that the suspect was employed by Mr. Iskandar.

The suspects told police after their arrest that they killed Mr. Iskandar in retribution for the continuous humiliation Hisham was subjected to by Mr. Iskandar.

The court tribunal,

presided over by Judge Abdul Hamid Sa'ad and including Judges Yassin Abdullah and Ahmad Khatib, postponed the case to Dec. 21 to hear the last two prosecution witnesses.

Also Monday, the Criminal Court heard the testimony of a forensic expert in the case of a 35-year-old Syrian national accused of murdering a Syrian family in their apartment in June of this year.

The suspect, Fateh Jilasi, reportedly confessed to murdering Jamal Abdo, 38, his wife Manal Othman, 35, and their two-year-old son Khalid.

Pathologist Ibrahim Ramahi, who examined the three bodies, told the court that he located six stab wounds to the neck, chest, and stomach of Mr. Abdo, and a similar number of stab wounds on Ms. Othman.

"Ms. Othman also suffered first degree burns to the left part of her body," Dr. Ramahi added.

The coroner, who was testifying for the prosecution, stated that the child died of asphyxiation "attributable to manual strangulation."

At the end of the 20-minute court session, Prosecutor Bassem Momani rested his case

and presented the court with the case file.

The defendant's attorney informed the court that his client wanted to present a statement "because his confession in front of the prosecutor does not represent the truth."

Mr. Jilasi told interrogators shortly after his arrest that he killed the Syrian family in revenge for a financial dispute with Mr. Abdo's father.

The court tribunal, presided over by Judge Mohammad Ajameh and including Judges Mifleh Mubaidin and Issa Hamdan, agreed and set Dec. 20 for this purpose.

New downtown tunnel leaves some residents feeling hollow

By Ahmad Khatib
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — For motorists, the much-trumpeted opening of a major road tunnel in an impoverished and densely-populated area in Amman has eased traffic congestion and made driving more fun.

But for others, especially drivers of the service taxis and the area's residents, the 200-metre long tunnel, built at a cost of JD5 million, has wreaked havoc on their lives. In recent interviews, several drivers complained to the Jordan Times that they could no longer stop along the fast lane to pick up passengers, once their main livelihood.

Other residents said the Greater Amman Municipality demolished their homes without giving them enough financial compensation.

"The country has to continue in its course of development," one municipality official said. "The project has reduced traffic congestion and revived the Wadi Haddadeh area after it was neglected," he added. "The prices of land there are shooting up and there will be new development projects and supermarkets."

But many residents along the area housing the projects disagreed. "We were not paid enough money in compensation when they took over our plot of land and pulled down the house to build the road," said a resident who requested anonymity. "They did not even give us enough time to find a suitable place to move," he complained.

However, Amman Mayor Mamdouh Abbadi rejected charges of unfair compensation and said many of the houses straddling the tunnel were built illegally.

"Some of these houses were built illegally on government property and when we decided to do the projects, we had to regain these plots," he told reporters during a recent tour of municipality projects.

The tunnel leads to Wadi Haddadeh and from there the street branches out to Mahatta area and to Zarqa. Another road is planned from Wadi Haddadeh to link the downtown area with Istiklal (Nuzha) highway.

The tunnel project took 180 days to be completed by an Italian company working under the supervision of the municipality.

"All my relatives were forced to move from the Haddadeh area because the municipality needed their lands to do this project and the upcoming one," said service taxi driver Faris Nasser, 22.

"On top of that, they were not given enough money." Another service taxi driver, Salim Ahmad, added: "I lost my house and almost 90 per cent of my work because they removed dozens of houses from the area and with them the passengers."

"I bought a new car several months back because business then was good. But now, I do not know where to get the 321 dinars to pay the bank installment and they are threatening to impound my car and put me in jail," he

added. Another resident said he lost his father because of the project. "He died from a heart attack after the municipality ordered the demolition of our house."

He said he and his three

other brothers were all operating one service taxi to support their families. "These projects have invaded our life and our neighbourhood and we do not know what to do."

Some residents said the tunnel had some construction

defects, such as its narrow lanes in both directions, while others said the tunnel did not bring an ultimate solution to traffic congestion along the road leading to Jabal Weibdeh and the downtown.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FILMS

* Children's film "Just William II" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 5:00 p.m.

CHRISTMAS RECITAL

* Christmas recital by Lexi Haddadin, Barbara Proust, and Beth Everett accompanied by Mohammad Othman Sidiq at the Anglican Church, Jabal Amman, First Circle at 8:00 p.m.

LECTURE

* "Sweden, Museums, and Artists" (in Arabic) by Ali Maher at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.


EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 20.

* Photo exhibition by Edgardo Rodriguez entitled "Arab Presence in Cuban Architecture" at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 20.

* Plastic (abstract) art by Iraqi artist Dhia Khaza'i at Hammarabi Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5536098), until Dec. 18.

* Exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraishi and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Hassan Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.



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EU special envoy arrives in Rwanda

KIGALI (AFP) — Aldo Ajello, the European Union's special envoy for the Great Lakes region, has arrived in Kigali for a three-day official visit amid heightened concerns over the security situation in Rwanda, officials said Tuesday.

The special envoy's visit follows an attack by Hutu extremists last week on a camp for ethnic Tutsi refugees in the conflict-ridden northwest of the country which left as many as 1,000 dead, according to witnesses.

Mr. Ajello, who arrived late Monday, "comes to Rwanda periodically, (and) will make contact with Rwandan leaders," a source in his delegation said, adding that Mr. Ajello's programme had not been fixed up.

He plans to travel to Ethiopia and Tanzania after his visit here.

Monday, Emma Bonino, the European Commissioner for humanitarian concerns, called the massacre at the Mudende camp "a shameful and barbarous act of cowardice."

Calling for "more national and international energies and resources (to) be devoted to reconciliation and

peace-building," she said: "Rwanda has seen enough blood and massacres."

Meanwhile, in Addis Ababa, the chief executive of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Salim Ahmed Salim, issued a statement Tuesday to seek world support against genocidal killers and condemned the massacre.

"The secretary general of the OAU has learnt with shock and indignation of the dastardly massacre of innocent refugees in the Mudende camp," the OAU statement in the Ethiopian capital said.

"He firmly condemns this massacre, whose sheer brutality and magnitude, as reflected in the number of victims, mainly women and children, is totally unacceptable."

"At a time when the international community has been encouraging the government of Rwanda in its efforts at promoting national reconciliation, this cowardly and brutal act has come as a sad blow to these efforts," the statement said.

Mr. Salim declared that the massacre was a "clear illustration of the fact that the ideology of genocide is unfortunately still in the minds of extremist elements

who do not want peace and reconciliation for that country and in the region."

Rwanda was torn apart and its legal system left in ruins mainly between April and July 1994, when Hutu government troops and extremist Interahamwe militiamen massacred between half a million and 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus before the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) seized Kigali.

The U.N. Security Council in 1994 set up an international court, now based in Arusha, Tanzania, which has begun trying people held mainly responsible for the genocide, while more than 100,000 Rwandans are jammed into over-crowded jails at home, many of them on suspicion of taking part in the slaughter.

The OAU statement said Mr. Salim "therefore reiterates his appeal to all OAU member states and the rest of the international community not to give refuge and succour to genocide suspects and to take all the necessary measures to ensure that such suspects are brought to justice, within the context of the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda."



Cars move along leaving traces of steam in Moscow as record cold continued to grip much of Russia Tuesday, reaching -28.8 degrees Centigrade overnight in the Russian capital (Reuter photo)

Moscow shivers in record mid-December freeze

MOSCOW (AFP) — Moscow experienced its coldest mid-December in almost a century Tuesday, as the temperature plunged to minus 28.8 degrees Celsius, ITAR-TASS news agency reported, quoting meteorologists.

Anatoly Yakovlev, a spokesman for the State Hydrometeorological Committee, said the coldest mid-December temperature previously recorded in the capital was minus 28

Celsius in 1902.

The temperature had already dropped to minus 27.3 degrees Celsius the previous night.

Mr. Yakovlev said temperatures were expected to rise to minus 20-22 degrees Celsius overnight to

Wednesday, with daytime temperatures reaching minus 15-17 degrees in Moscow, as the Arctic anti-cyclone moved west towards Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova.

Five people died of hypothermia in Moscow in the past 24 hours, out of 49 admitted to hospital suffering from the cold, Boris Nikolsky, deputy head of the Moscow city government, told ITAR-TASS. The victims were either drunk or homeless.

He said the heating supply for Moscow's 3.5 million apartments was normal, and there had been only two minor breakdowns overnight.

Killer cholera epidemic spreading fast in East Africa

NAIROBI (AFP) — An epidemic of the killer disease cholera is spreading fast in East Africa after two months of disastrous flooding, according to reports from authorities in the region Tuesday.

On Tanzania's semi-autonomous island of Zanzibar, the death toll rose to 80 Tuesday morning after 20 more deaths in the past 24 hours, health officials told AFP. They said that more than 600 people suffering from cholera had been admitted to hospitals and treatment centres on the island, and that 37 had died at the weekend.

Medical staff at the main hospital said they were short of medicines and even sterilised water for intravenous drips to counter dehydration, and that each nurse was attending to at least 20 patients.

In Somalia, doctors said 15 people had died of cholera in north Mogadishu and a nearby village over the past few days.

In Kenya, newspapers reported that cholera had killed more than 30 people in two of Nairobi's worst slum townships during the past two weeks, though authorities put the toll at 15.

In Uganda, one person died and 70 others were admitted to Kampala hospitals Monday, health officials said.

Last week, health workers in south Mogadishu said at least 25 people, most of them children, had died of cholera there and that efforts to combat the disease were being hampered by lack of medicine.

Monday, Giovanni Brauzzi, the chairman of the Somalia Aid Coordination Body (SACB), said expatriate aid workers had pulled out of Mogadishu and the nearby middle Shabelle River region recently because of kidnappings and clan gun-fights.

He warned that in their absence, cholera could kill "up to 2,000 people."

censed public gatherings and the sale of food and juices on the island's streets.

The disease also left dozens of people dead in various regions of Tanzania, including the capital, Dar es Salaam, as well as Zanzibar earlier in the year.

In the sprawling Nairobi slums of Mathare Valley and Korogocho, where tens of thousands of the city's poor live, residents blamed the epidemic on a lack of public toilets.

The plight of cholera victims in Kenya has been exacerbated by a strike of all state nurses, now in its third week. They are demanding a 500 per cent pay rise.

Slum-dwellers complained that victims had been turned away from government hospitals and clinics without medical treatment.

A cholera epidemic swept western Kenya in September and October, leaving more than 200 people dead, according to unofficial figures. The health ministry said 140 people died.

The disease also hit Kenya's Indian Ocean coastal city of Mombasa last month, killing 12 people there.

Kampala's Mulago hospital administrator, Lawrence Kagawa, blamed the outbreak of the disease in the Ugandan capital on poor hygiene and a flooded drainage system.

Cholera was first reported in the Kampala suburb of Ggaba on the shores of Lake Victoria last week. It has since spread to 14 other Kampala districts.

Cholera is a highly infectious disease transmitted mainly through infected food and water. Symptoms include serious diarrhoea and extreme dehydration, and it is often fatal, though relatively easy to treat once the patient is hospitalised.

The flooding has destroyed latrines in many places and left hundreds of thousands of people without clean drinking water. The confirmed death toll from the flooding alone is over 2,000.

Serb dies outside joint command police station

ZAGREB (AFP) — A Serb man died from gunshot wounds he received when challenged by a policeman guarding a police station in Eastern Slavonia which recently came under Croatian interior ministry control, officials said Tuesday.

The 41-year-old man was shot by a policeman after he opened fire on the guard when challenged as he was spotted trying to crawl into the police compound at Beli Manastir Monday evening, a communiqué from the Croatian interior ministry said.

In an account of the incident, the statement said that the policeman "ordered him to put his hands up, and the unknown assailant opened fire several times, wounding the policeman in the arm. The policeman continued to fire and the aggressor, who threw a hand grenade, continued to shoot so the officer returned fire again."

The Serb later died of his wounds as he was taken to hospital, the statement said, adding that listening devices had been discovered on him.

Eastern Slavonia is all that remains of the self-declared state set up by nationalist Serbs in Croatia in 1991 when Zagreb seceded from the old Yugoslav federation and has been under U.N. administration for the last two years.

The rest of the rebel state was seized by the Croatian army in August 1995.

It is due to come under full control of Zagreb on Jan. 15 but as a first step during an initial transition period, police in the region formally came under Croat authority last Monday.

Until now, all police functions have been carried out by Serb police acting under the authority of the Serb leaders in Eastern Slavonia.

The 1,715-strong transitional police force is made up of both Serbs and Croats, working under the supervision of 400 U.N. civilian police.

The communiqué did not state if the policeman, who was injured in the exchange, was a Croat or a Serb.

U.N. to escort Cambodian refugees back home Wednesday

BANGKOK (AFP) — Supporters of leading Cambodian opposition figure Sam Rainsy have chosen to leave their exile in Thailand and return to Phnom Penh under United Nations protection, party sources said Tuesday.

The mass return of opposition figures loyal to Sam Rainsy signals a split in the exiled opposition against Cambodian strongman Hun Sen. It will leave behind in Thailand the supporters of ousted co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

The U.N. refugee agency will escort a group of 75 Cambodian refugees back to Phnom Penh Wednesday onboard an oriental Thai Airlines flight. They fled to Bangkok after the July takeover of strongman Hun Sen, which took place amidst fierce factional fighting.

Their return comes amid renewed fighting between Cambodian government troops and soldiers loyal to Prince Ranariddh in the north of the country. It also comes amid reports that elections scheduled for May next year have been postponed until November.

According to Khmer Nation Party (KNP) Secretary General Yimsokha Chanratana, 72 of those aboard the plane arriving in the Cambodian capital from Bangkok are exiled KNP members.

The returning members will join KNP leader Sam Rainsy, who returned to Phnom Penh in late November, six months after he fled to Bangkok ahead of Second Prime Minister Hun Sen's bloody July 5-6 ouster of Prince Ranariddh.

The United Nation's High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said in a statement Tuesday that the Cambodian

nationals, who had accepted voluntary repatriation, would have the protection of U.N. officials and Thai diplomats.

The UNHCR confirmed plans for Wednesday's repatriation, but refused to comment on details of the operation.

"There are 72 persons from the Khmer Nation Party on board the flight returning tomorrow," the KNP's Yimsokha Chanratana said.

"They are returning because Mr. Sam Rainsy is there, and because the U.N. is providing security and will monitor the government, military and police activities," he added.

The en-masse return of KNP members signals a split in the exiled Union of Cambodian Democrats (UDC) and leaves the leader of the royalist FUNCINPEC party, Prince Ranariddh, alone — and isolated, analysts say — in Bangkok.

"Yes (it is a split), I think FUNCINPEC must be loyal to the prince, and he cannot return safely, so they must remain here," Yimsokha Chanratana said.

"I myself acknowledge that the provincial areas, especially (pro-royal) ones, are still under threat. They are far from Phnom Penh and U.N. eyes," he said.

FUNCINPEC members of the exiled opposition UDC party that reside in Bangkok said they did not know of any of their members who had chosen to return on Wednesday's flight. The UDC is made up of officials loyal to Prince Ranariddh and Sam Rainsy who fled Cambodia in July. They have been waging an information campaign against Hun Sen from their adopted base in Bangkok, and lobbying for the chance to stand in free and fair general elections

next year.

According to FUNCINPEC sources, it is still too dangerous for opposition figures to return to Cambodia, as Hun Sen has not kept a promise to create conditions conducive to free and fair elections.

"Frankly, with the information we have, it is not safe at all," an exiled FUNCINPEC member of parliament told AFP in Bangkok.

However, although party members are not willing to return permanently to Cambodia, they plan to send a second fact-finding delegation to Phnom Penh during the first week of January, the FUNCINPEC MP said.

"We are going to send a second team to Cambodia to organise the party and prepare for elections," he said. "They will go in the first week of January. The situation is not safe but we have no choice. The elections are important," he added.

The first FUNCINPEC fact-finding mission, which went to Cambodia under U.N. supervision, arrived back in Bangkok earlier this week. It claimed no progress had been made towards making the country safe for opposition parties.

Sam Rainsy, meanwhile, in Phnom Penh, criticised Hun Sen for allowing his forces to attack the last bastion of the prince's resistance forces in the dusty border hamlet of O'Smach.

The fierce attack, in its second day Tuesday, could mean the withdrawal of the FUNCINPEC troops from the hill-top stronghold straddling the Thai border in northwest Cambodia.

The former finance minister said the attack was not in the spirit of progress towards free and fair elections in the strife-torn country.

Carlos appointed court lawyer at triple murder trial

PARIS (AFP) — The trial of international terrorist leader "Carlos" for a triple 1975 murder went into a third day Tuesday, with the defendant counselled by a court-appointed lawyer after his original defence team quit the court in protest.

Minutes after the opening of the session, new defence counsel Olivier Maudret requested a recess to consult with Carlos, who was born in Venezuela and whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez.

He is charged with the fatal shootings June 27, 1975, of two French policemen and a Lebanese informer in a Paris flat. The incident was the closest he came to being arrested in the 1970s and 1980s, when he was hunted for attacks across Europe and the Middle East.

Mr. Maudret was appointed by the court Tuesday after Carlos' initial defence team — a French, a Lebanese and a Venezuelan lawyer — quit the trial in protest at the court's refusal to reopen an investigation into the 1975 killing of two French police officers and a Lebanese informer.

The new lawyer had asked for a weeklong postponement of the trial, which began last Friday, to familiarise himself with the case but the delay was refused by Presiding Judge Yves Corneloup.

Instead he was given 40 minutes to discuss the case. Carlos' chief defence counsel Isabelle Coutant-Peyre argued Tuesday there were holes in the prosecution case and that the court had failed to try hard enough to track down witnesses to the killings. She said the 1975 bid to interrogate and apprehend the Latin American was part of a foreign plot.

"We are being made to

believe that Carlos was responsible for the incident when in fact it was a matter of states, in the plural," she said Tuesday.

"If you plan to continue to judge this case without witnesses I will conclude that the defence cannot exercise its rights nor carry out its work," she said. "Your decision is contrary to the oath I took as a lawyer. I am quitting the trial."

Captured in Sudan in 1994 by French agents and held in solitary confinement ever since, the 48-year-old self-styled "professional revolutionary" faces spending the rest of his life behind bars if convicted for the triple killings.

He also faces trial in France for five other attacks. Elegantly turned out at each hearing, the grey-haired Carlos has largely ignored his defence team so far, preferring to stand up in the dock and address the Assize Court himself, in French with a thick accent.

As the trial opened last Friday, he called on the court to annul the case on the grounds it was "illegal" and added: "I was kidnapped."

The appeal, which has already been over-ruled by international courts, was thrown out by the three judges.

Carlos has also called on Judge Corneloup to disqualify the right of a group of victims of terrorism to act as civil plaintiffs in the murder trial. The plea is to be examined later.

Born into a wealthy Marxist family, Carlos trained in guerrilla techniques in Palestinian camps and fought with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) until setting up his own "terrorist international" with the help of the Communist bloc and some Arab nations.

Russian team attempts winter climb of McKinley

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (R) — Three Russian climbers were preparing a winter ascent of North America's tallest peak, a difficult feat that has been accomplished by only a handful of expert mountaineers, National Park service officials said Monday.

The climbers — Artur Testov, 32, and Alexandr Nikiforov, 29, both of Riasan, and Vladimir Ananich, 40, of Moscow — were scheduled to fly to the base camp at 20,320-foot Mount McKinley later this week to begin their expedition, said J.D. Swed, chief mountaineering ranger for Denali National Park.

Almost all of the more than 1,000 annual mountaineers who attempt McKinley do so between April and July, when weather on the near-Arctic peak is mildest and daylight

hours are maximised. The last expedition to reach McKinley's summit was a trio of Austrians in February of 1989, according to Park Service records. A few days later, three Japanese climbers attempted to reach the summit in a fierce storm.

Winter weather on McKinley is particularly severe, so much so that climbers avoid mid-winter expeditions, Quinley said. "Most of the so-called winter climbs, and all of the successful ones, have been in February or March," he said.

The Park Service's mountaineering guide, given to all climbers who attempt McKinley, warns against winter expeditions. It says the combination of weather and altitude at that time of year make McKinley "one of the most hostile places on this planet."

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Polarisation threatens ties

THE VISIT to Ankara last week by the Israeli Minister of Defence Yitzhak Mordechai, in a high-profile bid to bolster military and economic cooperation between the two countries, came at the same time as the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) was holding its summit meeting in Tehran. If there was a message in the timing it probably was that Israeli-Turkish relations were being improved regardless of Islamic solidarity and sensitivities.

We fail to understand why else Turkey sought or consented to receive the Israeli minister exactly when its president, Suleiman Demirel, was in Iran to attend the conference.

In fact military ties between Israel and Turkey figured high on the agenda of the Islamic summit and much effort went into averting a brewing crisis over them. Perhaps Ankara should have showed greater sensitivity by putting off the visit and certainly by putting on hold plans to grant Israel new contracts to upgrade Turkey's military aircraft and to coproduce about 1,000 tanks until at least the current deadlock in peace talks was broken.

Turkey realises, as much as the rest of the Arab and Islamic countries do, that this is no time to reward Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu who does not miss a chance, or a sound bite, to delink his policies from the isolation his country faces as a result of pursuing them.

When even Israel's best friends, for instance the U.S., are trying desperately to isolate or else inculcate some sanity in his mind, a country as important and sober as Turkey cannot possibly go in the opposition direction. As long as Israel can claim to have won a new ally in the Middle East, which is also a major military power, it will feel less the pressure being applied against it to move along the path of peace.

Even though Turkey does not have the best of relations with all Arab countries, it is no excuse to turn to Israel to fill the gaps. As an independent, sovereign republic Turkey can fashion its own policies in the region and outside. What all of us should be concerned with, however, is to nip in the bud attempts to establish balanced relations in the Middle East.

Further polarisations perceived to be threatening and new alliances seen to be dangerous by countries of the region could push us away from, rather than bring us closer to, the envisaged era of stability and peace. Cooperation among, and prosperity for, peoples have to be viewed as an indivisible whole in this part of the world.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Tareq Masarweh criticised the U.S. for calling on the Palestinians to exercise self-restraint in dealing with the Israeli practices instead of forcing the Jewish state to comply with the requirements of peace and to implement the Oslo accords. Why does Washington not try to restrain Israel's illegal actions and why does it allow the Israeli government to issue a law overnight banning the Palestinian census in Palestinian lands, Masarweh asked. The U.S. is witnessing the extremists and ultra extremist rulers of Israel outbidding one another in obstructing the implementation of redeployment of Israeli forces in the occupied lands, according to the Oslo deal, and Washington is well aware of the fact that the Likud-led government is totally oriented towards the destruction of the peace process, but it is doing nothing as a partner to the peace-making process to stop these measures, according to the writer. What the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, are getting from Washington are mere words and no action, he said. As a peace broker, Washington is watching Israel prevent the Palestinians from exercising the simple task of collecting demographic information necessary for their development plans, he added. The writer charged that the U.S. is doing nothing to earn credit as a partner to the peace process.

Al Arab Al Yawm's Saleh Qallab said oil is a strategic commodity, and the government should not depend on one source alone to obtain it. It is true that Iraq has been supplying Jordan with its oil needs at competitive prices, but no one can guarantee that the Iraqi regime would not change its mind and stop the flow, leaving the country helpless, said the writer. The successive governments of Jordan have failed in their duty to secure more than one source of oil supplies and left the country at the mercy of the whims of the rulers in Baghdad, he added. Qallab said that even among brothers there must be an equilibrium and Jordan must not be exposed to impulsive policies of other countries, which can turn out to be detrimental to the national interest. Recalling that allied war planes bombed oil tanker trucks hauling Iraqi oil to Jordan during the Gulf war, the writer said that because Jordan was not prepared to face such a critical situation, it had to turn to Syria which made the Kingdom pay hard cash in advance for the oil products it supplied to Jordan. Qallab urged the government to immediately embark on contacts designed to guarantee an alternative oil source in case of emergency.

Washington Watch

How will Israel meet U.S. deadline?

THE MIDDLE East peace process is approaching yet another fateful deadline. United States Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has given Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu until today (Dec. 17) to present a specific proposal for redeployment of the West Bank.

Looking at past Israeli behaviour and following the current Israeli debate, what will most likely occur is that Netanyahu will seek to do the minimum necessary to avoid antagonising the United States and being blamed for frustrating the peace process. At the same time, Netanyahu will attempt to protect his support base among Israeli hardliners who reject any further West Bank redeployment.

What Israel appears ready to do is to make some slight land concessions, amounting to about 10-13 per cent of the West Bank. The land surrendered, however, will only slightly alter the condition of the continuing occupation by expanding the size of the existing Palestinian cantons in the West Bank.

The United States pressure on Israel to respond to the Dec. 17 deadline has created a debate within Netanyahu's coalition, prompting several competing efforts to propose alternative approaches to meeting the United States' demands.

Although there are some variations in the proposed plans, the exercise has not, in itself, been helpful towards moving the peace process forward. In this regard, it is instructive to note that what has emerged as the compromise plan is the one offered by national infrastructure minister, Ariel Sharon. A situation in which Sharon emerges as the "realist" is bound to be a disappointment to the Palestinians and is an indication of how far Israel has veered from the path towards peace.

What Sharon is proposing has been described as establishing a "quilt of congested areas of

Arab population lacking contiguity with one another." This, it will be recalled, closely resembles the "Drobble Plan" first adopted during the Begin government in the late 1970s (when Sharon was a minister in charge of settlement construction in the West Bank). The intent of the Drobble plan was to create Palestinian reservations, with local autonomy and no sovereignty, surrounded by Jewish settlements and further divided by a patchwork of Israeli controlled roads and security areas.

Even if, as Sharon now concedes, the Palestinian areas might ultimately be called a state, it will be a state of disconnected parts. The Palestinians will lack control over most of their land, all water and resources, and passages not only with the outside but also amongst their many cantons.

That such a proposal is being seriously considered in Israel as a way to avoid United States pressure (Sharon briefed U.S. officials in Washington on his plan last week) is indicative of how seriously flawed the Israeli view of the peace process has become.

The intent of the current government in Israel is far afield from the goals of the Oslo accords. This Likud coalition like its Shamir-led predecessor remains committed to the concept of Eretz Israel. It refuses to recognise the existence of a separate national community of Palestinians with rights that must be recognised and implemented. And it refuses to accept the proposition that security is a mutual goal of both parties and can only be insured in the context of a just and comprehensive peace.

As long as this government recognises only its rights as legitimate and sees that its security can only be established by force and control of land — then we will be presented with such proposals as the "Sharon plan."

But the deadline of Dec. 17 is not a test for the Israelis alone. They will fail if they present

a proposal as inadequate and as contemptuous of Palestinian needs as the Sharon plan. But the real test will be how the United States responds to what Netanyahu presents to Secretary Albright.

Should Netanyahu fail to propose any "meaningful" troop movement by Dec. 17, the United States intends to table its own proposal. The U.S. will call for more substantial redeployment in phase two, insist on the settlement "time out" and create joint U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian efforts both to implement the third phase of redeployment and supervise the Palestinian efforts against terrorism.

Such direct U.S. engagement should be encouraged, but more will be required. Long after the former South African system of apartheid and its repugnant system of Bantustans had been rejected as inhumane, the effort to implement a similar system by Israel must also be rejected. To determine whether Israel passes or fails its Dec. 17 test, it will be important to look not only at the amount of land surrendered but the intent and direction of the Israeli redeployment efforts. In this context, it will be important for the U.S. to review Israeli proposals and to insist that any redeployments establish connections between Palestinian-controlled areas.

An additional way for the United States to press its concern that Oslo be fully and seriously implemented will be to announce, in addition to the above mentioned steps, U.S. recognition of the Palestinian right to a fully sovereign state. Such recognition would be no more intrusive to the negotiating process than the U.S. insistence that Palestinians recognise Israel's existence as a sovereign state. Negotiations, after all, are not about whether the parties have rights, but establishing the mechanisms and procedures to implement those rights.

By Dr. James Zogby

IT
OCCURRED
TO ME...

Thanks
for the
fish

By Ali Kassay

ONE OF my favourite books, the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, kicked off by placing its story historically, roughly two thousand years after humans nailed someone to a tree when he suggested that they ought to be nice to each other. The book, for those who have not read it, revolves around the construction of the earth, which was commissioned by mice, in order to conduct a multi-million-year behavioural study on humans, and the subsequent destruction of the planet in order to build a by-pass on the intergalactic motorway.

The only species other than mice who knew about the experiment and about the imminent destruction of the earth were the dolphins, who were conducting a study of their own on humans.

I find myself reflecting on all this at the present moment because this article carries a note of finality that is fortunately less cataclysmic than the subject of the book. As of next Wednesday, there will undoubtedly be weeping and gnashing of teeth among the readers of the Jordan Times, but IT OCCURRED TO ME there will be none.

The reason is partly that I am ethically bound to spare my employers as of next week any possibility of confusion between my personal views and theirs, and partly because I need to concentrate as much as possible during my spare time on completing a project that I started quite some time ago and that is already long overdue.

So I would like at this time to thank all my friends who were kind enough to encourage me during the two years or so of writing this column. Their ideas and constant encouragement were invaluable to me every Monday evening when my positions were rudely interrupted by the thought: "My God! I have an article to present tomorrow and not the ghost of an idea what to write about." Writing this column was great fun for me, and I hope sincerely that readers of the Jordan Times have enjoyed it too.

I should also present a special thanks to all Jordanian bureaucrats for their gallant efforts in providing me with a constant supply of material for these articles. They say that a writer is fortunate when real life comes to resemble his fiction. This was a case where real life surpassed any flight of the imagination. Not only did the diligence and efficiency of our bureaucrats benefit me, but also an untold number of Jordanian doctors who specialise in treating neurosis. Which brings me to the third part of the reason why I feel the need to stop this article, which is really that things may have gone somewhat beyond the realm of the humorous.

So I conclude with a second reference to the Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy, the message that dolphins gave to humans just before their departure: Good bye, and thanks for all the fish.

Refugee status in wider context

To the editor:

I REFER to the letter to the editor by Ghaith Al Omari published in the Jordan Times on Dec. 8 regarding Jordan's non-ratification of the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugee Status. The writer went into great length complaining about Jordan's hesitance to move from what he termed on one occasion as "the rule of whim and political expedience to the rule of law," and "from the realm of morality and politics to the realm of rights and law." Mr. Al Omari in effect is calling on us to replace "compassion" with "obligation" and "charity" with "rights." The thrust of the writer's thesis is to promote "predictability" in extending refugee status by removing the "scope of discretion by the decision maker."

I believe that this whole issue of Jordan's reluctance to become a state party to the 1951 convention and its 1967 protocol on refugee status needs to be viewed in its wider context.

For starters, Jordan finds itself in a region torn by armed conflicts and civil strife. It is also an area which is notably devoid of pluralistic democracy. Unlike countries in Europe which have not only formally and ceremonially ratified the said convention, but have also applied it, albeit unsatisfactorily, developing countries in regions of the world which are ripe for mass movement of peoples and refugee status seekers, can ill afford to extend refugee status to literally thousands and thousands of people fleeing from oppression and persecution in neighbouring countries. Over and above the material constraints, there are other limitations including political, social and security-related matters. Had Jordan opted to ratify and adhere faithfully to the convention, it would have had to be prepared to receive hundreds of thousands of people fleeing from neighbouring countries for one reason or another. Jordan can of course ceremonially ratify the necessary convention, but refrain from executing it in good faith as so many countries have done. But it is neither the nature nor the character of the country, to pay lip service to treaty obligations just for public relations considerations. The Kingdom has already done a great deal to alleviate the sufferings of the Palestinian people driven out of their homeland by Israel. To go beyond what has already been done may harm the political aspiration of the Palestinians for an identity and a homeland of their own. Opening our borders to a greater number of Iraqi refugee seekers would simply ruin the infrastructure of the entire country.

The writer also missed a major point in the convention which he would like us to ratify: Under the said convention, a refugee status is based not only on "the well founded fear of persecution," but also on the need to show that this persecution is conducted by the government or a governmental agent. This leaves the door wide open to refuse refugee status to people running away from persecution perpetrated by private groups or individuals.

And contrary to the findings of the writer, the hard evidence collected thus far on the application of the convention shows beyond a shadow of a doubt that the implementation of the relevant international refugee law in many parts of the world has been tainted with abuse, exploitation and a wide discretion by the decision maker. The processing of the application of refugee status has become so cumbersome and lengthy that even the most advanced countries of the West have begun to narrow down their own definition of a legitimate refugee. The application of the convention has been anything but "predictable." The whim of the decision maker is still there despite all efforts to do away with it.

W. M. Sadi

LETTERS

In-law's comments

To the editor:

JORDAN IS one of the safest and neatest countries in the world offering a variety of attractions to tourists from all over the world. But, to facilitate tourism and provide maximum comfort to tourists, the Ministry of Tourism may need to seek modification of some of the immigration protocols. For example, it is an irony that a tourist who enjoyed his/her time and spent over JD2,000 in Jordan be fined JD1,000/per day because he/she spent over the 14-day visa limit granted and did not report to the nearest police station for an extension of the visa as currently required by law. On one occasion, I myself paid JD14,000 for eight tourists (strangers to me), who had overstayed their visas by one or more days, because they did not have any Jordanian money and their flight, which I was also on, was about to depart. I paid for these tourists because I love Jordan and, been married to a Jordanian woman, I believe I have a moral obligation to protect the interest of tourism and other socio-economic growth in Jordan. In addition, despite my admiration and love for Jordan like other "international in-laws," married to Jordanians, it is almost impossible for us to get a residency permit, and naturalisation is out of the question. On one occasion when I attempted to get a residency permit, I was told to invest and/or deposit over JD50,000. Is this a tax or surcharge?

For foreign men married to Jordanian women, it is difficult to understand this policy when in fact any foreign woman married to a Jordanian man is entitled to residency and naturalisation. I am not sure what are the differences in these two categories because a Jordanian is a Jordanian regardless of sex. May I, on behalf of all other "international in-laws," use this opportunity to appeal to the Ministry of Interior to reconsider this policy if in fact it is the official state policy.

A final comment — it takes an average of 30 minutes for most tourists to go through the immigration (passport control) while the inspecting officers puff away on their Marlboro, Philip Morris and Winston cigarettes. Smoking, as we all know, is the worst preventable public health risk ever known to man. I cannot think of a worse way to welcome a non-smoking tourist than to salute him or her with the poisonous smoke of tobacco. As this poison continues to go up in smoke in the Western world where it is produced, the countries of the Middle East and other developing nations have become a safe haven where tobacco smoke can generate large profits with collateral damages of death, destruction and disability.

Dr. Samuel Ihemidi
 Natick, Massachusetts
 USA.

Peeping into palaces

To the editor:

IF THE words of White House Security Adviser Samuel Berger are to be believed (Jordan Times Dec. 9), "U.N. inspectors cannot account for 2,500 gallons of the dangerous anthrax gas," isn't this sufficient justification for the U.S. smartly disguised as U.N. attempts, to peep into the bedrooms of the Iraqi president? Also, don't ask how many gallons of this and many other more dangerous chemicals the U.S. or Western countries possess? Will the national security adviser also spell out what else is still unaccounted for in Iraq by the U.N. weapons inspectors? Just in case they need to "guide" the U.N. efforts in future.

Dr. Masud Ahmad Malik
 Sweileh

Lighter Thursdays on the tube

To the editor:

I DO appreciate the Jordan Television programmes and those who work on giving the best for the audience. Nevertheless, I have had a comment which I finally thought was worth mentioning after I watched the horror movie called "When the stranger called again."

I am not against horror films or films with sad endings; you are free to watch them or not. But when all the films we watch are either horror or sad, this becomes too much. On Saturday or Thursday evenings, if you don't have a satellite or don't intend to go out, you will end up with the local programmes as the only entertainment left, and it something amusing or light films and dramas would be appreciated.

Rula Samain Naffa
 Amman

Shocked and ashamed

To the editor:

AS A student, having witnessed an event last Monday, I just can't find the will to suppress my shock at and shame of my fellow Jordanians — youngsters.

Because French is a major subject in school, it is only natural that we also participate in activities relevant to studying the language, such as going to see the movie, "Microcosmos," an Oscar-winning film.

The theatre was practically a battleground. The students were shouting, singing their school-cheering songs, and booing. They left the theatre in a state that looked like the aftermath of a war, littered with pop-corn and all sorts of rubbish. For the record, the students in the audience came from private schools.

Honestly, I don't know who to blame. This hooliganism and ignorance will lead us nowhere in our already backward situation. I wonder: Will we ever catch up?

Maram Salah
 Amman

Self-serving 'freedoms'

To the editor:

AFTER PERUSING Mr. Marwan Hanania's letter (silencing ordinary voices, Jordan Times, Dec. 14) in response to Dr. Ahmad Majdoub's commentary on freedom of expression, I felt drawn to respond to some of the points submitted by Mr. Hanania.

Yes, maybe we cannot go on forever appeasing ourselves by comparing our freedoms with other's of third world countries, for at one point or another in our political, social and cultural evolution, we will have to start aiming at higher levels of democracy. But that does not happen overnight or by a stroke of a pen, for much needs to happen and change in us, the way we live, think, work, study and teach, dream, care and love.

What is scary is that many of those who are demanding more democracy fast and more freedoms of speech and expression, actually just want these for themselves, and would be the first to deny them to others if they became the decision makers and obtained power.

Walid N. Maaytah
 Amman

Jordan to launch long-term development plan by mid '98

By Ghalia Alul
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan will by mid 1998 launch a long-term economic and social development plan seen as an extension of previous social and economic schemes, officials said Tuesday.

"The strategy will also address Jordan's efforts to move towards economic liberalisation and globalisation under a partnership agreement signed with the European Union last month," said Yusuf Mansur, director of the technical department at the Ministry of Planning.

The deal envisages creating a free trade area by the year 2010 — a major challenge for the country's infant industries that have long relied on protectionist policies.

Jordan has also opened talks with the Geneva-based World Trade Organisation (WTO) and hopes to join the group later next year.

The 1998-2002 plan, as part of a series of socio-economic development schemes launched after the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, will also tackle Arab and regional cooperation, as

well as stability and sustainability of Jordan's economic environment.

It will focus on boosting the role of the private sector, vital for globalisation efforts, and on setting a framework for a public sector regulatory role.

Jordan last year introduced a new package of legislation aimed at jump-starting the economy and encouraging more direct foreign investments into the Kingdom, especially in industries and the Amman bourse.

Earlier this year, the government also introduced ambitious amendments to the investment law allowing a 100 per cent foreign equity ownership in six key sectors — a move opposed by the opposition who fear foreign domination over Jordan's strategic services and industries.

The five-year plan includes chapters on macro economic policies in a country moving towards privatisation and economic liberalisation.

It also has details for a multi-million-dollar Social Productivity Programme (SPP) that aims at easing the impact of economic reforms on Jordan's poor and unemployed.

The government has put poverty at 30 per cent of the population and unemployment at 15 per cent. But independent estimates have put the jobless rate at between 22 and 27 per cent in a country inhabited by 4.5 million people.

The development plan, Dr. Mansur explained, will detail investment policies in suitable investment sectors and a possible private sector role in these areas.

"It will serve as a reference for foreign investors to obtain information on Jordan's economic progress and future objectives," Dr. Mansur said.

"It will document Jordan's economic progress, it will provide information on the level of competitiveness and will benefit investors when they read about Jordan," he said.

Jordan's economy has dramatically improved from the doldrums caused by an economic crisis in 1988-89 that prompted Amman to launch reforms agreed with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

Officials said the economy was expected to grow by 5.7 per cent this year, almost the same as 1996.

Donors commit \$750m aid for Palestine

PARIS (R) — Donor countries committed almost \$750 million in aid for the Palestinian territories of West Bank and Gaza next year and promised to support development in them beyond 1998, the World Bank said.

They called on Israel to help improve the territories' economic situation by ensuring the free movement of people and goods and guaranteeing free access to Jordan and Egypt and the opening of Gaza's sea and airports.

The World Bank said the commitments for 1998 would translate into between \$500 million and \$600 million in actual disbursements. The bank said donors also committed a further \$150 million in guarantees for private investment.

Most of the money committed will go to helping The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) implement a three-year economic programme starting in January 1998. Palestinian Minister of Planning and International Development Nabil Sha'ath told a news conference.

About half of it will help pay for construction of roads, irrigation systems, garbage disposal plants and other infrastructure projects. The rest will go to health education and support for the private sector, particularly agriculture and tourism, he said.

"Our hopes were fulfilled," said an obviously pleased Sha'ath. "The donor community stood by us, it stayed with us, accepted our three-year national plan and endorsed it fully, and promised that they will stay with us beyond the five years that will end in October 1998."

The West Bank and Gaza economy has suffered recently due to repeated border closures imposed by the Israeli government in the wake of guerrilla attacks by Palestinian radicals. Sha'ath said the direct cost of the closures over the last four years totalled about \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion.

The World Bank said the Israeli delegation promised to do what it could to help the Palestinian economy.

"Donors welcomed the statement by the Israeli delegation at the meeting that committed Israel to support the Palestinian development process, including new efforts to facilitate uninterrupted access of Palestinian workers to the Israeli labour market," the bank said in a statement.

The Israelis also said they would try to promote "unimpeded movement of goods and labour to and from designated industrial estates in the West Bank and Gaza," the statement said.

The money committed on Dec. 15 is part of an initial \$3.8 billion five-year programme of aid pledged in 1993 by the international community

in support of the Palestinian territories at the start of the peace process launched by the signing of the Oslo accords, the World Bank said.

In the language of international aid, commitments carry a legal obligation to send the money, whereas a pledge is a political promise that may or may not be fulfilled.

Disbursed money is actually in the hands of governments and agencies implementing projects.

Including Monday's funds, donors have committed about \$3.8 billion and disbursed about \$1.8 billion since the initial pledge.

Dr. Sha'ath said the United States committed about \$85 million, Japan \$60-\$70 million, Germany \$65 million, the European Union \$60 million, the Netherlands \$50 million and Norway \$42 million among many others.

"It all adds up to real support for the Palestinian people in the coming years," Dr. Sha'ath said. While admitting that economic progress in the territories has fallen far short of what was hoped when the Oslo accords were signed, the World Bank said progress had been made in some areas including development of a more credible set of Palestinian institutions.

The bank has said that until the PNA has control of its borders, access to national resources and can independently manage its land, it will be very hard for the economy to produce durable economic growth.

But in the short-term, freeing access to external markets, opening new trade channels and diversifying the economy away from its disproportionate reliance on Israel were essential, the bank said.

Israel gears up to begin natural gas imports

TEL AVIV (R) — No one yet knows where the gas is going to come from, but Israel is moving ahead with plans to authorise a private sector company to develop a \$200 million domestic transmission network.

The plan, which envisages the first natural gas arriving in Israel in the year 2001, aims to wean the Jewish state off its exclusive reliance on heavy oil and coal for electric power.

Dan Vardi, a consultant to the government advising on the natural gas project, estimates that natural gas should account for 20 per cent of Israel's energy needs by the year 2015.

"Within 25 years we believe demand will reach 12.2 billion cubic metres," Mr. Vardi said.

Israel's national infrastructure ministry foresees a network capable of carrying two billion cubic metres of natural gas a year at the outset.

It will run from three points on the country's Mediterranean coast, where the gas is to be delivered to the three principal oil-fired power stations operated by state-owned Israel Electric Corp (IEC).

From there the transmission network will run to various sites around the country to supply smaller power stations, heavy industrial plants and big commercial users, because it involves complicated right-of-way negotiations, Mr. Vardi says the network will take two to three years to complete.

Earlier this month, the infrastructure ministry published an invitation to pre-qualify for the tender. Applicants were to have until Feb. 26, 1998, to apply.

The timetable may be delayed after a decision last week to transfer authority to government-owned Cross Israel Highway Ltd, whose main task is to develop Israel's first tollroad. The natural gas project management unit, which was handling the tender, has been disbanded.

IEC will be the main consumer of the gas, taking as much as 80 per cent of the initial supply. "The idea is that IEC will have two types of power stations — 50 per cent gas and 50 per cent coal-fired," Mr. Vardi said.

IEC is also conducting talks together with the government

with potential suppliers, but they are fraught with political difficulties and have gone slowly.

The government reached a preliminary accord with Qatar to import liquefied natural gas (LNG) but it never led to a final deal. Talks with Egyptian producers have waxed and waned because Cairo has conditioned a deal on progress in Middle East peace. Israel has weighed importing gas from Russia via Turkey but Israeli objects to Moscow's selling arms to Iran.

Authority to conduct the negotiations was reported to have been given to IEC to distance the talks from politics, but IEC spokesman David Golan denied that was a factor, stressing that talks were being undertaken by a joint government-IEC team.

"Negotiations are now under way, but they are at a preliminary stage, with Russia, Norway and Egypt — maybe Qatar," Mr. Golan said. The talks have been limited to general subjects, he said, saying he would not speculate when they would move to what he called the "commercial" stage.

"We have to know by the end of 1998 whether we will have the gas or not. By then we need to know the real potential if and when they can supply the gas to Israel," he said.

Without an ensured supply of gas Israel will have to build another coal-fired station to meet its growing energy needs. Israel will need the new plant by the year 2005 and it takes about seven years to develop one.

Mr. Golan said IEC's chief considerations in choosing a supplier were price and ability to begin delivery in time.

Those factors should favour importing the oil from nearby Egypt. Egyptian gas could be transported by undersea pipeline rather than as LNG carried by ship, which is more expensive.

"Economically, Egypt and Israel gain the most (from a deal)," Mr. Vardi said. "If it doesn't materialise, the other deals are more complicated and geographically distant... but Israel is committed to increasing its power production, if not by gas then by another source."

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 17, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) If you have any new projects you want to start, don't wait any longer. This is the best day you've had in quiet a while for innovations and creativity. Do your research and development, then launch. You won't get better conditions until spring.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) There's still more money to go out, and that's a concern. Be careful you don't duplicate your efforts. Better have a meeting this evening to make sure each of you knows what the other is doing. One thing you absolutely can't afford to do this time of year is to waste money.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You're strong, confident, powerful and good looking. You'll do well in groups and also with a partner. You won't do so well by yourself, but then again, you never do. It stimulates your imagination to have somebody to argue with. That will be true again today.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) There's more valuable learning experience to be had, so watch out. Technical matters need your attention, too. That is causing a problem, since it distracts from something you'd rather be doing. It could be costing you money, too. Don't complain. That'll turn out to be time well spent.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is another very good day for you, and the last for a while. If you want to start a new adventure, do it now. Your life's going to get much more complicated very soon. There's no point in procrastinating. It's now or never.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You need to follow through with a communication you promised. It could be nothing more than answering phone messages. If you're dealing with a big company, think hard. Is there someone you promised to call back by now? If so, better do it. You will be able to get the favour you want by remembering this one little detail.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) This is an absolutely marvellous day for you. Get together with friends around lunch time and again at dinner. You have lots of reasons to celebrate. Besides, you're the life of the party. Without you, the others hardly have any fun at all. Do your best to entertain them.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Your boss or teacher will come up with great ideas today. Some will be lucrative, others ridiculous. Meanwhile, someone at work could help you achieve a dream — something you've been wanting to do for others. You don't have the skills to do it by yourself. Get more people involved. One of them has the answer.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Don't be outrageous first thing this morning; it won't turn out the way you expect. Your chances for success are better later in the day. A project you take on this afternoon could be even more successful than you dreamed. Its impact will be huge; it could make you rich and famous.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You notice all sorts of clues that indicate there's something going on at home, involving secrets and money being spent. Don't be alarmed about it, however. This always goes on around this time of year. In fact, you might be participating in the game yourself.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You don't want a change in plans right now. You especially don't want to give up your authority. You're a lot more powerful than you realise, and you're certainly more powerful than the other person realises. Don't be bullied into doing something you don't want to do.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) The workload is intense again, but the remuneration is bountiful. There's stress where money is concerned, however. Are you still paying off last year's bills? Or are you racking up bills you'll be paying off all next year? Don't overspend just because your income went up.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- Phil or Lou
- For's dog
- Others
- The king of France
- Cooking chamber
- Attract
- Colorado park
- Last of a star
- Advanced degs.
- Numerical ending
- Diamond swinger
- "Enterprise" crew member
- "Town"
- Hooking with a horn
- Ishtary anguagelay
- Employment
- Grave robber
- Furiousness
- Pound to a pulp
- Picking agent
- "A Death in the Family" dramatist
- Inarticulate comment
- Deceives
- Prevailing tide
- Apple skins
- Art schools
- Past prime
- Leftover cards in pinocle
- Ring swinger
- Mil. training course
- Holy smokes!
- Pub preferences
- WWII vessel
- Model MacPherson
- Infamous tear
- Racer's reward
- All even
- Silly
- Frank of CNN

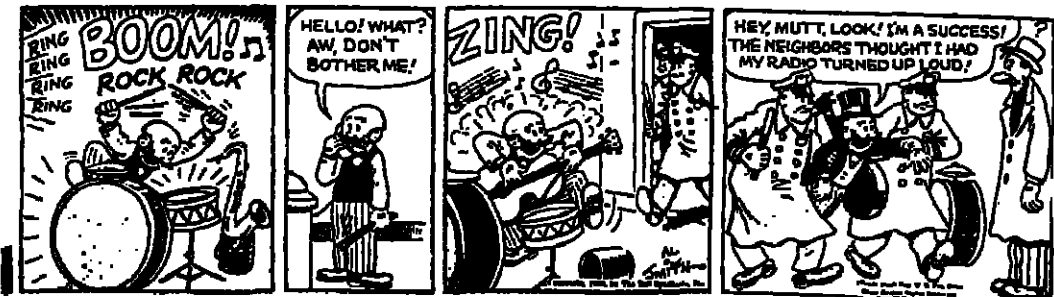
DOWN

- Jubilant gaiety
- Stopover
- Court swinger
- Leader of the Three Stooges
- Make flats sharp
- "Klute" star
- Swear
- Jacob's third son
- Similar thing
- New York city
- Weighty instrument
- Composer
- Fewer
- Work unit
- Break in the action
- Lofly
- Put out of working order
- Missouri tributary
- Collins and Hartman
- Charged particles
- Fairway swinger
- Godness of peace
- Requirements
- Sailors' liquor
- Female slave
- River through Florence
- Thin covering
- Tiresome times
- Fully equipped
- Golfer Morgan
- Never existed
- Encounter
- Jamaican citrus fruit
- Healthy
- Thomas Edison's middle name
- Unhearing
- "The Godfather" star
- Town near Caen
- Opie's aunt

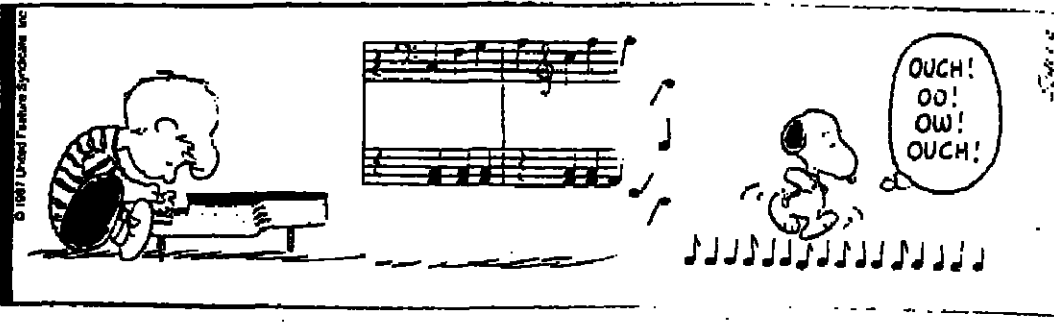
Peanuts



Andy Capp

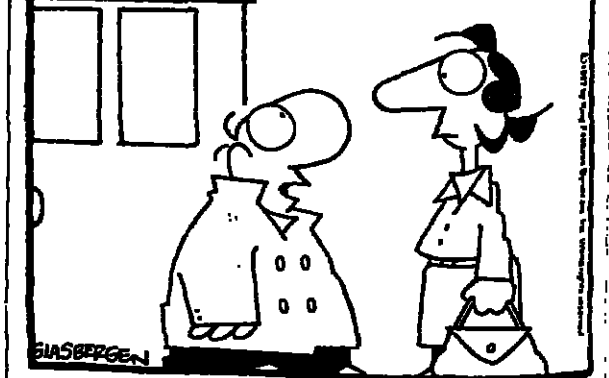


Mutt'n'Jeff



THE BETTER HALF

By Glasbergen



JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ROYAF

NOSOW

TIFONY

ENJUKT

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Print answer here: IT

Yesterday's Jumbles: BLIMP WHOOP MEMOIR MATURE Answer: The absent-minded professor had plenty of this — ROOM AT THE TOP

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic Press

Drugstores warn Jordan University Hospital over large unpaid dues

****THE DIRECTOR** of the Jordan University Hospital has warned of deteriorating conditions as the government has not paid JD8.5 million it owes to the hospital. As such, he said, the hospital has not been able to settle its dues to drug stores. According to hospital director Mahmoud Abu Khalaf, bills of patients transferred by the Ministry of Health, the Royal Court and the Prime Ministry will be settled by the General Expenditure Department at the Ministry of Finance, but the department has paid only JD1 million and JD4.5 million remain to be settled.

By adding another JD4 million of accumulated "health insurance" obligations, the total debt becomes JD8.5 million which represents the whole amount that the hospital owes to the drugstores, Dr. Abu Khalaf explained.

"The hospital has received warnings from drug stores that they will stop dealing with it," the director said noting that the hospital has run out of some medicines since September.

Asked when was the last time he contacted the government, Dr. Abu Khalaf said: "We call the concerned parties once a week on the average and the government has been giving us promises to settle its financial dues for the past six months." He indicated that there is a deficit in the "health insurance budget" and in the allocations at the Ministry of Finance. The allocations do not exceed JD2 million whereas the cost of treatment for those transferred from the government is around JD11 million (Al Ra'i).

Jordan Valley Authority opens opportunity for industrial and commercial investment

****THE JORDAN** Valley Authority is in the process of setting up free industrial and commercial areas in the Jordan Rift Valley in order to activate trade between Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories. According to Dureid Mahasneh, the secretary general of the Jordan Valley Authority, the aim is to attract Jordanian, Arab and international investments to three areas: Sheikh Hussein crossing in the north, another area in the centre and a third one in the south, north of the Agaba airport.

Dr. Mahasneh indicated that once the investments are established that means providing the various infrastructure of energy, water services, communication facilities and transport as well as other needs. He said that work at the free zones will start "upon receiving the applications, sorting them out and approving them on condition that the industries are environmentally suitable for the region."

The secretary general said the authority "will provide the lands to interested investors based on a lease for 30 years that can be renewed for a similar period." (Al Ra'i).

Higher medicine prices will hurt consumers — JCPS

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government decision to raise medicine prices has drawn a wide range of criticism from the Jordan Consumer Protection Society (JCPS) and members of the Lower House of Parliament but the Jordan Pharmaceutical Association (JPA) said the decision was necessary to safeguard the medicine industry in Jordan.

The Ministry of Health decision to hike the prices of medicine authorised an increase ranging from five per cent to 50 per cent. The decision only covered medicines registered in the Kingdom before 1989.

According to the decision, medicines worth less than JD1 were hiked by 50 per cent whereas those which cost between JD1 and JD2 were raised by 20 to 30 per cent. Prices of medicine above JD3 were increased by five per cent.

"The JCPS was shocked by the ministry's decision," said Mohammad Obeidat, chairman of the society.

"Who says that the demands of pharmaceutical firms should be answered so fast," Dr. Obeidat told the Jordan Times.

"What is happening in Jordan is only for the sake of a handful of traders who monopolise these necessary items...We call upon the ministry to review its decision," Dr. Obeidat said.

Abdul Raheem Issa, head of the pharmacists' association, said the increase was necessary to safeguard the pharmaceutical industry in Jordan.

Mr. Abdul Raheem said that following the devaluation of national currency in 1989, no change was recorded in the prices of

medicine.

"Though the prices of raw materials needed for this industry had increased worldwide, no change was registered in the medicine prices in the Kingdom," he explained.

He emphasised that neighbouring countries were importing large quantities of Jordan-made medicines without questioning prices.

"But recently, those countries started to insist that the prices given to them be close to the same prices in Jordan," he said.

"This means selling our medicines in Saudi Arabia with, by and large, the same prices that exist in the Kingdom. This is not possible," Mr. Abdul Raheem told the Jordan Times.

He said that the price increase will not affect the medicines in high demand, such as medicines used for

blood pressure, diabetes, heart diseases and antibiotics.

The head of JPA said that imported medicines sold in the Kingdom at high prices made it impossible to continue in manufacturing similar items in Jordan at lower prices.

"I do agree that the people have the right to feel angry, but we are not the party to be blamed. The government is responsible for this mess," he said.

"The salaries of Jordanians should be hiked as a result of the devaluation of the dinar. It is a must. It is unwise to keep the same range of salaries while everything is increasing," he claimed.

Adnan Abbas, secretary general of the health ministry, defended the decision and said that low-income groups will not be affected by the decision.

"The decision was important for the locally-produced medicines which were affected by the devaluation of the dinar. This will reflect positively on the Kingdom's foreign currency reserves," Dr. Abbas added.

Meanwhile, several Lower House members criticised the ministry's decision and urged in their speeches on Sunday and Monday to take into consideration the needs and (financial) capabilities of the Jordanian people "who are overburdened by many hikes in prices in the past few months."

The deputies were referring to the increase of several necessary items such as water, bread and other items as a result of the economic restructuring programme agreed with international financial institutions.

Japan lends \$16m to Jordan's energy sector

AMMAN (J.T.) — Japan has agreed to provide a \$16 million loan to Jordan to help improve the efficiency of the Kingdom's energy sector, according to a Japanese embassy press release Tuesday.

The fund, which was extended Tuesday, is the third instalment of the Energy Sector Adjustment Programme (ESAP) loan.

Japan agreed to the transfer after it certified that Jordan fulfilled all the conditions of the ESAP loan agreed between the two countries, the state-ment said.

Japan provided the

ESAP loan in parallel with the World Bank's ESAP loan. The terms of the Japanese loan are concessional, carrying the annual interest rate of three per cent, with a repayment period of 30 years, including a 10-year grace period, the announcement read.

From 1991 to 1995, Japan provided \$893.5 million in official development assistance to Jordan on a net disbursement basis, and continues to be the largest donor among bilateral and multilateral donors to the Kingdom, the statement concluded.

Arab Bank reports strong demand for Capital Guaranteed Fund

AMMAN (J.T.) — Arab Bank has announced that its Capital Guaranteed Fund has generated strong demand amongst investors seeking security and high return potential for their capital.

Launched in two tranches across the Middle East, the first available from Sept. 13 until Oct. 13 and the second from Sept. 27 until Oct. 27, the fund has attracted in excess of \$100 million from investors.

Commenting on the success of the Arab Bank Capital Guaranteed Fund, Khalid Shoman, deputy chairman and president of Arab Bank said: "We are delighted that both existing and new customers have responded so positively to this investment product. Arab Bank looks forward to introducing additional new products over the forthcoming year as we continue to meet the increasingly sophisticated investment needs of existing and future customers across the Middle East."

Dubai builds oil pipeline for airport

DUBAI (AFP) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai has set up a pipeline to transport jet fuel to its international airport as part of a long-term development plan, officials have said.

The 56-kilometre pipeline links the airport to the Jebel Ali free zone, where the fuel processing facilities are based.

It will have a capacity of 40,000 barrels per day and will allow the government to stop services by tankers shuttling daily on the highway. Dubai, the second biggest member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), is planning to expand its airport to face a steady growth in traffic. It is currently the second busiest airport in the Middle East after Cairo.

REUTERS The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	Prices as at 18/12/97 18:02
US Dollar	1.0000	1.7832	0.6124	0.4418	130.88	1.4225	1748.20	2.0089	5.9725
DE Mark	0.5608	1.0000	0.3429	0.2090	73.20	0.7974	1079.93	1.2173	3.3501
GB Sterling	1.6328	2.9130	1.0000	0.6557	163.26	2.3227	3366.40	3.2652	9.7630
CH Franc	0.6835	1.2359	0.4239	1.0000	90.73	0.9860	1211.01	139.30	4.1389
JP Yen	0.0078	1.3634	0.4677	1.1023	1.0000	0.0875	137.37	163.62	4.5661
CA Dollar	0.7038	1.2511	0.4265	1.0118	1.09	1.0000	1226.85	1.4092	4.1867
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0188	0.3500	0.0824	1338.87	0.8134	1.0000	11.49	3.4151
FR Franc	0.4975	0.8868	0.3045	0.7174	95.02	0.7076	888.38	1.0000	2.9708

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	JOD	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	1.0000	0.7090	3.7502	0.3770	3.6410	0.3050	3.6728	1523.00	3.3950
Jordan Dinar	1.4104	1.0000	5.2894	0.5317	5.1354	0.4302	5.1803	2148.10	4.7884
Saudi Riyal	0.2687	0.1891	1.0000	0.1005	0.97	0.0813	0.98	405.11	0.9053
Bahrain Dinar	2.85	1.8905	9.8475	1.0000	9.66	0.8080	9.74	4039.79	9.0083
Qatar Dinar	0.2748	0.1947	1.0300	1.0000	1.01	0.0838	1.01	418.29	0.9324
Emirate Dinar	3.2787	2.3246	12.2957	1.2361	11.94	1.0000	12.04	4993.44	0.9324
Kuwait Dinar	0.2723	0.1930	1.0211	0.1026	0.9913	0.0830	1.00	414.67	0.9244
Lebanese/1000	0.66	0.4655	2.4624	0.2475	2.3907	0.2003	2.4116	1.0000	2.2292
Egyptian	0.2946	0.2088	1.1046	0.1110	1.0725	0.0898	1.0818	448.60	1.0000

Energy									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	Prices as at 18/12/97 18:02
Brent	16.88	17.07	10.00	6.50	163.26	2.3227	3366.40	3.2652	9.7630
WTI	16.88	17.07	10.00	6.50	163.26	2.3227	3366.40	3.2652	9.7630
Bonny	16.88	17.07	10.00	6.50	163.26	2.3227	3366.40	3.2652	9.7630
Dubai	16.88	17.07	10.00	6.50	163.26	2.3227	3366.40	3.2652	9.7630
UL Gas	173.00	174.00	100.00	65.00	1632.60	232.27	3366.40	326.52	976.30

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)									
Currency	Period	1M	3M	6M	9M	1Y	2Y	3Y	5Y
USD	5.81	5.78	5.78	5.78	5.78	5.78	5.78	5.78	5.78
GBP	7.38	7.56	7.56	7.56	7.56	7.56	7.56	7.56	7.56
JPY	0.30	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29
DEM	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69	3.69
FRF	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44	3.44
CHF	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.25
ITL	6.09	5.96	5.72	5.35	5.18	5.18	5.18	5.18	5.18

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr.Cls	Open	Close
New York	DOW JONES	7986.2	73.61	0.93	8006.15	7924.33	7922.59	7922.59	7922.59
New York	S&P 500	971.4	8.01	0.83	972.53	963.39	963.39	963.39	963.39
London	FTSE 100	5194.6	72.8	1.42	5199.3	5124.1	5121.6	5121.6	5121.6
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	15985.21	76.52	0.48	16130.4	15802.6	15808.4	15808.4	15808.4
Paris	CAC 40	2908.61	70.34	2.48	2912.62	2864.38	2868.27	2868.27	2868.27
Frankfurt	DAX	4083.97	23.93	0.59	4094.39	4058.77	4060.04	4060.04	4060.04

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHEIKHANI											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 16/12/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS		COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANG.	
HIGH	LOW										
346,000	249,000	ARAB BANK	15.2	1.21	1	200	66200	332.00	331.00	1.00-	
N	2,340	1,680	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	E	0.00	3	1750	3203	1.84	1.83	-01-
S	3,600	1,900	BANK OF JORDAN	5.7	0.00	16	60850	109702	1.80	1.80	-
	1,200	890	MID-EAST INV. BK.	73.6	0.00	1	100	112	1.14	1.12	-02-
	2,680	1,730	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	10.6	5.90	2	1400	10325	1.78	1.77	-01-
	5,300	4,600	THE HOUSING BK.	15.3	3.75	1	1500	7680	5.12	5.12	-
S	4,180	1,850	JOR. KUNAFIT BANK	10.6	0.00	5	3350	6667	1.99	1.99	-
	990	710	JOR. GULF BANK	4.2	9.86	5	5027	3568	71	71	-
	4,050	2,380	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	12.2	4.02	12	3000	7189	2.40	2.39	-01-
	1,530	1,110	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	P	0.00	2	14000	15540	1.14	1.11	-03-
	1,840	870	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITINA)	5	17.24	3	1600	1402	0.87	0.87	-
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 235.92 %CHG: -0.29 51 98777 234287											
	2,050	1,550	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	9.4	5.13	15	20634	40154	1.94	1.95	-01+
	1,550	930	ENTL. PORTFOLIO	0.00	0.00	14	9750	10357	1.05	1.06	-01+
	1,010	820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.5	6.67	5	1074	962	0.88	0.90	-02+
	810	470	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	27.7	0.00	10	9050	4715	0.51	0.54	-03+
	1,050	740	JORDAN EXPR. INV.	0	0.00	3	1600	1863	0.90	0.95	-05+
	1,090	900	ZARQA EDUCATION	0	0.00	4	497	473	0.95	0.96	-01+
	2,230	1,630	UNIFIED CO.	8.0	6.55	2	350	588	1.67	1.68	-01+
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 108.38 %CHG: +0.23 53 43355 59111											
	1,150	930	ATTACHES	0	0.00	1	100	115	1.15	1.15	-
	4,450	3,000	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.2	3.67	3	420500	1282500	3.02	3.00	-02-
	11,160	9,200	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.0	8.59	5	508	5257	10.35	10.35	-
	1,410	1,040	WOOLLEN INDUST. AG.	9.0	9.62	2	1250	1303	1.04	1.04	-
	3,260	1,330	INDUSTRIAL COMM. AG.	0	0.00	3	1000	1400	1.40	1.40	-
	7,000	5,800	JOR. MOBILE TEL.	10.3	3.13	1	8000	51200	6.50	6.50	-10+
	4,700	3,440	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	11.4	4.85	4	1609	6634	4.11	4.12	-01+
	7,250	4,600	JOR. CERAMIC IND.	4.7	4.35	1	50000	230000	4.60	4.60	-
+	2,800	1,900	GENERAL TRADING	0	0.00	3	1507	1507	0.96	0.96	-10-
	3,850	2,220	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.7	10.29	2	500	1215	2.42	2.43	-01+
	670	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9.5	0.00	10	4650	2097	0.45	0.45	-
	1,770	510	NATIONAL IND.	0	0.00	3	5000	4200	0.84	0.84	-01+
	1,190	410	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	0	0.00	5	4500	1845	0.41	0.41	-
+	4,610	3,430	ALADDIN CO.	22.7	2.96	1	300	810	2.70	2.70	-
	3,000	1,170	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFAC	28.9	0.00	3	1250	1460	1.17	1.20	-03+
	890	530	JOR. SULPHUR CHEM.	0	0.00	4	2600	1535	0.58	0.60	-02+
	1,610	1,160	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	15.2	5.88	2	450	536	1.20	1.19	-01-
	S	1,840	UNIV. MOON. IND.	P	2.25	38	66740	56641	0.84	0.86	-02+
	1,410	920	JOR. IND. RESOURCES	9.5	14.08	9	5000	4260	0.90	0.90	-01+
	1,040	810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	16.3	0.00	6	2750	2475	0.90	0.90	-
	1,980	1,340	EL-KAY READY WEAR	48.9	0.00	13	4300	5950	1.35	1.39	-04+
	1,330	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.7	0.00	7	15400	18788	1.22	1.22	-
	1,200	860	UNION CH. & WES.	47.7	3.00	1	4000	42	0.00	0.00	-01-
	810	710	JORDAN STEEL	33.5	6.76	2	1000	740	0.74	0.74	-
	840	570	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.4	16.67	19	117000	70200	0.60	0.60	-
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 114.77 %CHG: -0.06 148 712127 174912											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 169.59 %CHG: -0.18 252 854349 2042610											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 16/12/1997											
	570	300	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	0	0.00	2	10500	3465	0.34	0.33	-01-
	610	340	JOR. TRADE FAC.	9.6	0.00	24	26600	9405	0.35	0.36	-01+
	800	360	UNION INV. 50%	0	0.00	18	178416	35967	0.71	0.71	-
	360	870	ARAB FTX INVEST.	0.00	61	203670	43	3866	0.43	0.43	-
N	1,000	720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	P	0.00	1	5000	4700	0.94	0.94	-02+
	2,050	1,050	CHENG INV. GROUP	0	0.00	3	4000	7900	2.00	2.10	-10+
N	180	140	JOR. IND. WATER-JEKCO	0	0.00	1	860	1501	1.50	1.49	-01+
	670	440	ARAB FOOD & MED.	0	0.00	4	1500	735	0.16	0.17	-01+
	530	280	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	34.6	0.00	1	250	75	0.29	0.30	-01+
	380	360	NATL. HULT. EM. INVTICO	0	0.00	64	211600	98923	0.45	0.47	-02+
N	1,200	890	READY MIX CONCRETE	12.1	0.00	1	2200	1280	1.00	1.00	-
	1,400	860	UNION TOBACCO 75%	0	0.00	8	3183	3619	1.37	1.40	-03+
	730	550	RAZI PHARM.	E	0.00	5	7325	4849	0.66	0.67	-01+
	280	180	INDS. ENG.	0	0.00	1	860	145	0.29	0.29	-
+	830	600	INDS. CERAMIC	14.9	0.00	6	4800	2746	0.60	0.57	-03-
	820	490	NATL. POULTRY	0	0.00	20	39600	21384	0.54	0.54	-
N	1,000	660	NATL. ALUMINUM. 75%	93.2	0.00	4	1050	441	0.67	0.67	-
GRAND TOTAL 235 710120 288233											
J: New 12 months high + : New 12 months low S: Stock divided during the past 12 months N: Listed during the past 12 months P: P/E ratio is 100 or more - : Negative P/E E: Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

All six cleared in Senna trial

IMOLA (AFP) — Frank Williams, his technical director Patrick Head and former chief designer Adrian Newey, along with three race officials, were all cleared of manslaughter on Tuesday over the 1994 death of Ayrton Senna.

However, Head and Newey will have to wait and see if there is to be an appeal by state prosecutor Maurizio Passarini against the verdict announced here by 36-year-old magistrate Antonio Costanzo.

In his summing up last month, Passarini had called for Williams and the three race officials to be cleared — but for Head and Newey to be given a one-year suspended sentence.

Passarini said on Tuesday he would study Costanzo's explanation of the verdict before deciding whether to appeal, but that if he did so, it would be to challenge the verdicts given for Head and Newey.

The three race officials are Federico Bendinelli, head of the SAGIS company which rented the Imola track, Roland Bruynseraede, the then Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) circuit inspector and Giorgio Poggi, the then clerk of the course.

Peter Goodman, one of the lawyers

retained by Williams, said: "It is the right verdict, the trial was correctly done and Williams will be very pleased that it is over and that it's gone successfully for him."

Luigi Stortoni, an Italian lawyer representing Newey, who is now with rival Formula One team McLaren, said: "The initial hypothesis was not valid."

"The prosecution case has been swept away and, without doubt, this young judge has had a lot of courage."

Bruynseraede's lawyer Roberto Causo and Bendinelli both said the outcome would settle the fears of Formula One. Leading figures in the sport had previously warned that guilty verdicts could lead to a boycott of Italian circuits in seasons to come.

Causo said: The verdict will have a calming effect on the future of Formula One.

Bendinelli added: "Not only have the accused been cleared, but also the Imola circuit. And that will restore calm in the world of Formula One, and among those who might have been afraid of coming to Italy."

Senna was killed when his car left the high-speed Tamburello bend during the San Marino Grand Prix and

slammed into a concrete wall.

A front suspension strut sheared off during impact and pierced the Brazilian's helmet, causing fatal head injuries.

The British trio were charged with manslaughter because Passarini claimed that Senna's shortened steering column had been a botched job, and had failed as he took the bend.

However, he called on Costanzo last month to clear Williams of the charge, saying that the team owner handled the business side of the company and was not directly responsible for the accident.

But he called for the one-year suspended sentence for both Head and Newey, who he claimed bore ultimate responsibility for the changes made to Senna's steering column.

Passarini had asked for the race officials to be cleared as he believed they were not directly to blame for Senna's death. The prosecutor had previously claimed, though, that the trackside layout had not enabled the Brazilian to brake properly as he left the asphalt.

The trial, which opened in February, was the first of its kind in the history of Formula One.



San Francisco 49ers wide receiver Jerry Rice (80) catches a pass from 49ers quarterback Steve Young while being covered by Denver Broncos cornerback Ray Crockett (L) in the second period of their game at 3Com Park. The game was Rice's first since sustaining a major knee injury in the first regular game of the season. San Francisco won 34-17 (Reuters photo)

Rice returns as 49ers win 34-17

SAN FRANCISCO (AFP) — Jerry Rice caught a touchdown pass to complete his stunning return from a knee injury Monday, helping lift San Francisco to a 34-17 win over Denver.

The victory gives the 49ers, home field advantage throughout the NFC playoffs.

Rice, who suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament and torn medial collateral ligament in his left knee in San Francisco's season-opening 13-6 loss at Tampa Bay, got in between cornerback Darrien Gordon and safety Steve Atwater and caught a 14-yard scoring pass from Steve Young to pull the 49ers within 10-7 with 6:53 left in the second quarter.

Rice bruised his left knee on the catch and did not play at all in the second half. The TD reception was the 155th of his Hall of Fame career and made him the first non-kicker in NFL history with 1,000 career points.

Young completed 22-of-34 passes for 276 yards and a touchdown for San Francisco (13-2), which clinched homefield advantage for the first time

since 1994, when it went on to win a fifth Super Bowl. Young starred on the night the man he replaced, Joe Montana, had his number 16 retired in a halftime ceremony.

San Francisco scored three times off turnovers by John Elway, who had one of the worst games of his career. He finished 16-of-41 for 156 yards and two interceptions as Denver (11-4) allowed the Kansas City Chiefs to take the AFC West title and homefield advantage in the AFC playoffs. The Broncos can secure a first-round home playoff game by defeating San Diego next weekend.

Denver's Terrell Davis left the game with a bruised right shoulder after gaining just 28 yards on 10 carries. Davis needs 250 yards to join Eric Dickerson and O.J. Simpson as the only players in NFL history to rush for more than 2,000 yards in a single season.

Nagano Winter Olympics to host record 71 countries

NAGANO (AFP) — At least 71 countries will take part in the Nagano Olympics here in February, making it the biggest-ever Winter Games, organisers said Tuesday.

So far 82 national Olympic committees have expressed their wish to participate in these Games with Kenya being the latest addition, the Nagano Olympic Organising Committee (NAOC) said.

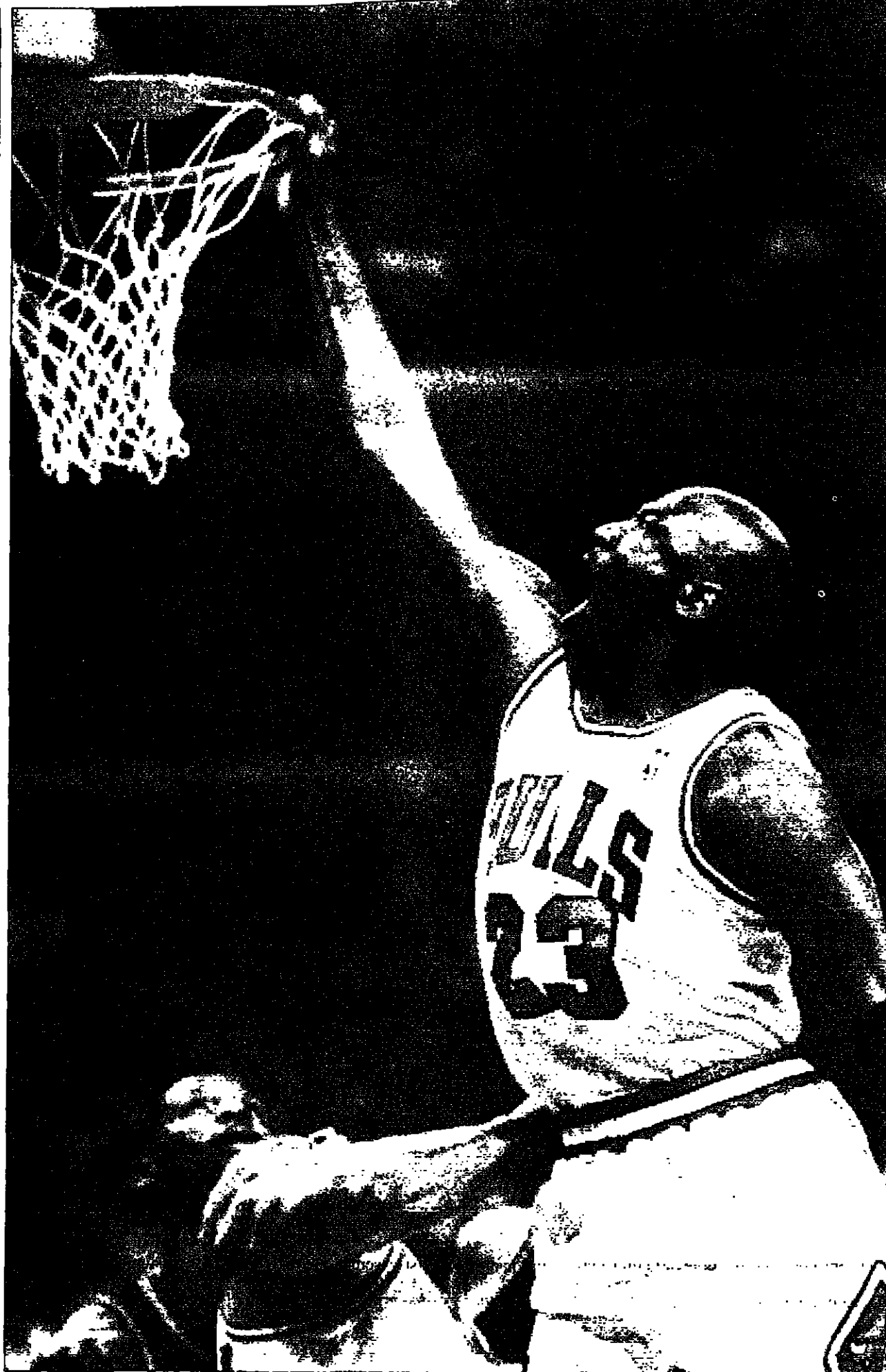
Of them, 67 have submitted the number of competitors expected to be entered as well as applications for accreditation.

Four other national Olympic committees have confirmed their participation and vowed to submit all necessary documents "as soon as possible," NAOC said.

Of the remaining 11 countries, the Bahamas, Azerbaijan and five others were unlikely to come as their competitors might not meet minimum qualification standards.

This may leave the Nagano Games with 75 countries, bigger than the previous Winter Olympic mark of 67 countries registered at the last 1994 edition in Lillehammer, Norway.

Azerbaijani, the former Yugoslav republic of Macedonia and Uruguay will be newcomers to the Winter Olympics.



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan (R) dunks in front of teammate Dennis Rodman (C) and Phoenix Suns' Antonio McDyess (L) in the first quarter of game in Chicago. Chicago won 111-104 (Reuters photo)

Celtics beat 76ers; Bulls overcome Suns

BOSTON (AP) — Ron Mercer, left out of the starting lineup because of a slump, scored 20 points as the Boston Celtics beat the Philadelphia 76ers 100-83 Monday night.

Philadelphia played without star guard Allen Iverson, who was serving a one-game suspension for missing a practice.

Mercer scored 10 points during the decisive third quarter, when the Celtics broke the game open with a 22-5 run. Jerry Stackhouse led Philadelphia with 25 points.

Indiana Pacers 108, Toronto Raptors 101: In Toronto, Reggie Miller scored 22 points, and reserve Jalen Rose had 15 points and seven assists as the Indiana Pacers continued their domination over the Toronto Raptors.

Indiana, which is 10-0 against the Raptors, has won three straight overall and nine of its last 11.

Marcus Camby scored a season-high 28 points for Toronto, which fell to 2-21 with its 10th straight home loss.

Washington Wizards 88, Utah Jazz 86: In Washington, Juwan Howard scored 21 points as the Washington Wizards remained unbeaten at their new arena. The Wizards blew an 11-point fourth-quarter lead before

recovering for their fifth straight victory at the MCI Centre. Washington snapped a three-game losing streak and improved to 8-0 against Western Conference teams.

Karl Malone scored 26 points for the Jazz, who have lost three straight road games.

Chicago Bulls 111, Phoenix Suns 104: In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 31 points, Dennis Rodman grabbed 21 rebounds and the Chicago Bulls used a big second quarter to beat the Phoenix Suns.

Toni Kukoc scored 23 points for the Bulls and Jason Caffey added 18 points and 10 rebounds, both season highs, before fouling out.

Atlanta Hawks 99, Portland Trail Blazers 90: In Portland, Oregon, Tyrone Corbin scored a season-high 19 points and Christian Laettner added 19 points and 15 rebounds as Atlanta won its third straight game.

Reserve Ed Gray added 16 points for the Hawks, who were playing their fourth road game in five nights. Gray took over at point guard in the second quarter for the slumping Mookie Blaylock, who scored only eight points on 3-of-12 shooting.

San Francisco 49ers retire Joe Montana's No. 16

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — To the wild cheers of an adoring crowd and the sparkling flashes of hundreds of cameras, Joe Montana returned once more to the windswept field off San Francisco Bay as the 49ers retired his No. 16 jersey Monday night.

Introduced by former coach Bill Walsh, the man who drafted and developed him, Montana was clearly impressed by the reception. "Back in 1979 when I first

stepped on the field, I never imagined I'd be in this position tonight having my number retired," Montana said.

Broadcaster Al Michaels introduced a retrospective of Montana's career, calling the quarterback a "Bay Area icon and a man who has come to embody the 49ers franchise."

Eddie DeBartolo, who was the managing owner of the team for 20 years until two weeks ago when he stepped

down to face allegations of gambling fraud in Louisiana, also praised Montana. But first he got his own cheers, pausing several times in his speech because of the cheers for him.

"This man has etched his place in NFL history as the greatest quarterback who has ever played the game," DeBartolo said.

The halftime event was just one of several converging story lines Monday night. The 49ers' game

against the Denver Broncos also spelled the return of star receiver Jerry Rice, who had been out since the season opener because of a serious knee injury. He caught three passes in the first half, one for a touchdown, before taking off the rest of the night.

Rice, on the receiving end of 55 touchdown passes from Montana, stood in the end zone and applauded Montana during the ceremony.

San Francisco's third-round pick out of Notre Dame in 1979, Montana led the 49ers to the playoffs 10 times, including four superbowl championships.

He spent more than a decade as the team's starter before an elbow injury forced him to the sidelines for nearly two years. During his absence, Steve Young asserted himself as the 49ers' quarterback.

When the 49ers decided to stick with Young as their

starter, Montana was traded to Kansas City before the 1993 season. He spent two seasons with the Chiefs before retiring.

For his career, Montana threw for 273 touchdowns, 244 with the 49ers. He orchestrated 31 fourth-quarter comebacks during his career, including "the catch," the miracle pass to Dwight Clark in the 1982 National Conference championship game.

Young, who obviously

was not a part of the halftime ceremony Monday because he was in the game, praised the man who once kept him on the bench as backup.

"He taught me how to learn to play, how you prepare to play football," Young said earlier this week. "He would do things, and I would see it and think, 'That's a tremendous play, that's where I've gotta get, I've gotta be able to do

that."

Montana joins seven other 49ers who have had their jerseys retired. They are: quarterback John Brodie (12), running back Joe Perry (34), cornerback Jimmy Johnson (37), running back Hugh McElhenny (39), defensive tackle Charlie Krueger (70), tackle Leo Nomellini (73) and Clark (87).

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Dugarry to join Marseille

BARCELONA (AFP) — Olympique Marseille are set to line up Barcelona's French international striker Christophe Dugarry alongside their French record signing Fabrizio Ravanelli. Dugarry's agent Lucciano Donofrio said Tuesday he expected a transfer to be agreed this week. Dugarry has failed to win a first-team place since his transfer from AC Milan, where he also spent most of his one season on the subs' bench. Marseille signed Ravanelli from English side Middlesbrough for a record five million francs (\$8.7 million). Barcelona are also expected to sell Argentine striker Juan Antonio Pizzi to Graeme Souness' Benfica and sign Dutch defender Frank de Boer from Barcelona coach Louis Van Gaal's old club Ajax Amsterdam.

Mexico coach to quit

RIYADH (AFP) — Mexican coach Manuel Lapuente said Tuesday he would quit after the World Cup next summer to allow the federation to choose a long-term younger replacement. "After the World Cup we have to get a young Mexican coach on board so he can work at the job the long term," said Lapuente, who only took over a month ago from Serbian "Bora" Milutinovic. USA coach four years ago. Speaking at the Confederation Cup in Saudi Arabia, Lapuente, 53, admitted his team was "not ready for this tournament." He explained: "We didn't really appreciate the importance of this competition and I've had to change things around. We're only functioning at about 40 per cent of our capabilities," Lapuente said, adding: "If we had to play the World Cup tomorrow we wouldn't get past the first round."

Italians book dates

BRESCIA (AFP) — Italy have arranged World Cup warm-up friendly dates with Slovakia and Paraguay, whom they will respectively face at Catania in Sicily on January 29 and on June 3 at an unspecified venue. Coach Cesare Maldini, who welcomed the chance of two serious workouts prior to taking on Chile, Cameroon and Austria in the finals in France next summer, said he had already drawn up a list of 16 "definites" for his squad. He added he would use the warm-up programme to give others such as Inter Milan defender Luigi Sartor a run out before making his final selection. Of the draw, Maldini said: "It's a normal draw and we can certainly come through. But we must finish first if we want to avoid Brazil, red hot favourites." Paraguay are likely to provide a stiff test after qualifying for France as the second team in South America after Argentina. Their reward was a tough draw alongside Spain, Nigeria and Bulgaria.

Hudson seriously hurt

LONDON (AFP) — Former Chelsea star and England international midfielder Alan Hudson was seriously ill in hospital Tuesday after being hit by a car. Hudson, 46, who starred for Chelsea, Arsenal and Stoke, underwent emergency surgery following the accident Monday night in the east end of London. Hudson made his name in the Chelsea team which won the European Cup-winners' Cup in 1971.

Hitzfeld turns down Swiss

GENEVA (AFP) — Borussia Dortmund's sporting director Ottmar Hitzfeld has turned down an offer to take over the reins as Switzerland's national coach to replace Rolf Fringer. The Swiss association revealed Tuesday. Hitzfeld, 49, led Dortmund to the European Cup last season before moving "upstairs" and giving way to Nevio Scala. But he said it was "too

soon to return to Switzerland." He joined the Germans after a successful spell with Grasshopper Zurich and turned one of Germany's best-supported but under-achieving sides into UEFA Cup finalists and double league champions before claiming the big prize against Juventus last May. Hitzfeld's contract runs out in 1999 and he has hinted he may look for another big club post in Europe. He recently turned down England's Tottenham and has also attracted interest from Glasgow Rangers as well as Real Madrid and Barcelona. The Swiss, who dispensed with Fringer's services after failing to qualify for the World Cup, may now turn to former Italian boss Arrigo Sacchi, a target for Nigeria. Sacchi is currently not coaching after an abortive second spell at AC Milan last season.

Briton survives plunge

LONDON (AFP) — A British man who plunged 600 metres (2,000 feet) after his parachute tangled with another skydiver's survived virtually unscathed because he fell into a ploughed field. British press reports said on Tuesday. Businessman Bren Jones, 56, a veteran of 3,500 parachute jumps, suffered only minor scratches and bruising from his brush with death in Lincolnshire, eastern England. Jones had leapt from an aircraft at 1,700 metres with three other skydiving enthusiasts, but when he reached about 600 metres, his chute became entangled with another parachutist's. "I realised I had a very serious problem on my hands and I had a limited amount of time to sort it out," he said. The two men had a brief conversation, and decided the other man would pull a "cut-away" handle — to free him from the tangled chutes. The other skydiver went on to land safely with his reserve parachute, while Jones carried on in free fall towards the ground. Found semi-conscious and taken by air ambulance to hospital, he later said he was looking forward to his next jump.

Brown traded to Padres

MIAMI, Florida (AFP) — The World Series champion Florida Marlins continued their offseason dismantling Monday, unloading star pitcher Kevin Brown to the San Diego Padres. Brown, who owns the lowest earned-run average in baseball the past two seasons (2.26), was shipped to the Padres for first baseman Derrek Lee, right-handed pitcher Rafael Medina and left-handed pitcher Steve Hoff. Marlins owner Wayne Huizenga is in the process of selling the team to a group headed by team president Don Smiley and said the club must curb a payroll that exceeded \$53 million last season. One of the keys to the financial slashing was the unloading of Brown, who is entering the final year of a three-year contract that will pay him \$4.8 million next season. Marlins general manager Dave Dombrowski has already unloaded outfielders Moises Alou and Devon White, closer Robb Nen and first baseman Jeff Conine since winning the World Series in October.

Fowler stays at Liverpool

LIVERPOOL, England (AFP) — Liverpool moved quickly on Monday to refute fresh speculation that star striker Robbie Fowler is on his way out of the club, possibly to join Premiership rivals Arsenal. The Anfield club have been worried enough about claims that Arsenal are interested in buying Fowler as a replacement for the ageing Ian Wright to issue an emphatic "hands off" statement. A Liverpool spokesman said: "This really is fantasy football. Robbie is not for sale and is not going to be allowed to leave this club. He is Liverpool through and through."

Jagge wins at Sestriere

SESTRIERE (AFP) — Norway's former Olympic champion Finn Christian Jagge stole the limelight from Alberto Tomba here on Monday night when he sped to a floodlit victory in the World Cup slalom. Jagge clocked 1min 51.43sec to beat Austria's Thomas Sykora (1:51.77) and another Norwegian Hans-Petter Buraas (1:51.85).

Italian hero Tomba roared back from lying 20th after a poor first run to finish fourth in 1:52.05 after first-run leader Jure Kosir of Slovenia skied out of the race just as he looked destined for victory. Jagge, who won the 1992 Olympic slalom at Albertville and who was third in the season-opening slalom at Park City, had been lying third after the first run down the Kandahar piste. But he turned on the power in the second, despite the poor conditions here as a day-long snowfall continued throughout the race, notching the fourth World Cup victory of his career.

"It's nice to have a race at night because this is how we have been training in Norway since we were kids," he said.

"The piste wasn't as icy as it was for the world championships here but it was still rough and bumpy. And you can never count Tomba out of a race even if he's not doing well. "It's been up and down for me at Sestriere in the past," he said, "so now it feels good to be on top."

Jagge, like his Norwegian compatriots, all are focussing on winning a slot at Nagano next year.

"It's going to be hard to get on the Olympic team," he said. "But the competition does help because we push each other to do well."

Sykora finished second after struggling to keep his balance in a tricky lower half of the piste.

"I made a big mistake in the last 10 gates and I lost some time there," he lamented.

"But I haven't always been lucky here — at the world championships I was injured."

Buraas produced a second minor miracle to reach the first podium of the 22-year-old's career — having earlier set the eighth best time in the first run after starting with bib number 37.

Buraas, who was sixth at Park City, said: "I've been on the World Cup for three years, but this is the year that I'm breaking through."

My dream is to do well in the World Cup and to qualify for the Olympics.

2nd Islamic Games for Women Mutari earns gold, silver medals for Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

JORDAN'S AMAL Al Mutari Tuesday secured the Kingdom's first two medals as competition got underway at the 2nd Islamic Games for Women in Tehran, Iran.

As the athletics event started in the city of Rushd, Mutari clinched the gold medal in the 3,000 metres and added a silver in the 1,500 metres.

Mutari had won a bronze medal in the marathon at July's Pan-Arab Games.

Meanwhile, in Isfahan, the table tennis players got off to a bad start being drawn in a tough group in the team event which includes Pakistan, Syria, Kazakhstan and Indonesia.

Iran, Yemen, Lebanon, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan are playing in the other group.

Jordan lost 3-1 to Syria, 3-0 to Kazakhstan, and 3-0 to Indonesia.

The table tennis singles and doubles matches begin today with Hadeel Awad playing the singles and Alia Tuffaha and Lina Majdalawi teaming up for the doubles.

Badminton matches also start in Isfahan today with Najwa Al Turk joining Lina Rashdan in the doubles and Karolin Shaker playing the singles.

Jordan's 14-member delegation joined those of 19 other nations in the Dec. 13-21 Games held in three Iranian cities — Tehran, Isfahan and Rushd.

The Kingdom's delegation missed the opening ceremony due to a flight delay. Jordan also missed the meeting

of the general assembly of the Islamic Solidarity Council which was reportedly held last month.

Nine Jordanian athletes are competing in athletics, table tennis and badminton in the Kingdom's first participation in the event — described as a "symbolic one" by Jordan Olympic Committee (JOC) Secretary-General Ismat Kurdi.

The delegation includes four officials and a referee.

The event officially opened with a ceremony in the Azadi Stadium west of Tehran, and is the first such event organised by Iran since February 1993.

The exclusively female Games were originally expected to bring together about 1000 athletes from 26 countries.

The Games are organised by Iran's Sports Solidarity Council for Women, headed by Faezeh Hashemi, daughter of former Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

The event was originally to be hosted by Pakistan, but returned to Iran after Islamabad pleaded financial difficulties.

Events at the Games are athletics, chess, swimming, basketball, volleyball, tennis, shooting, handball, badminton, gymnastics, squash, equestrian and karate.

The Games are being held less than two weeks after the Iranian capital hosted the 1st Southwest Asian Games which were open to men's teams only.

Jordan took part in eight sports and won ten medals at the event.

United surge clear with 4 points

MANCHESTER (AFP) — Ryan Giggs finally hit the target as Manchester United powered four points clear at the top of the English Premiership with a 1-0 victory over Aston Villa at Old Trafford on Monday.

Giggs had four good chances to score before he found the back of the net with a stinging shot after 52 minutes which set up a richly deserved victory for rampant United.

United were in irresistible form as they stormed their way to their 12th Premiership victory from 18 starts and they head into the hectic Christmas period as outright favourites to retain their



Manchester United's Andy Cole (L) tackles Aston Villa player Ian Taylor during their Premiership match. Manchester United beat Aston Villa 1-0 (Reuters photo)

title. Alex Ferguson's side, who have won the Premiership four times in the past five seasons, could even afford the luxury of Teddy Sheringham missing a penalty 20 minutes from time.

Villa, who have not lost to United in their last four meetings, had the first chance to open the scoring when Stan Collymore released Ian Taylor with a perfectly timed pass.

The midfielder had timed his run to perfection but saw his shot charged down when United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel sprinted off his line and threw himself at Taylor's feet.

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SOUTH
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♥ A4
♦ 732
♣ A1075

The bidding:
EAST Pass SOUTH Pass WEST Pass NORTH Pass
10 NT NT Pass NT
Pass Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♣

It is a pleasure to watch two players cooperating on defense, the most difficult feat of bridge. Sitting East-West on this deal were former world champions Bobby Goldman and Paul Soloway. Their opponents were Dutch internationalists Enri Leufkens and Barry Westra. North's two diamonds was an attempt to locate a 4-4 major-suit fit. When South denied holding a

major, North decided that his five-card suit and fitting cards in South's known club suit were sufficient to contract for game. West led a low heart, and East's ten was taken with the ace. Declarer cashed the ace and king of spades and led another, setting up two long cards in dummy. In with the queen of spades, West realized that the routine play of a heart might lead to partner coming under intense pressure when declarer cashed the long spades in dummy, so East thoughtfully shifted to a diamond. Dummy played low and East could have set up the whole diamond suit by covering with the ten.

Fortunately, East also realized the discarding problems on the spades. To counter that, East rose with the ace, cleared the king of hearts and exited with a low diamond to the queen. Declarer cashed the long spades and king of clubs, then led the jack. East played low and declarer was trapped. If South overtook the jack of clubs, East would score the last two tricks with the queen of clubs and high diamond, so dummy's jack was allowed to hold. But now West scored the last two tricks with Q 9 of hearts when declarer had to lead a heart from the table.

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The closing date for submitting bids is 12:00 hours local time Saturday 17th January, 1998.
Sameh Madani
Managing Director

ANNOUNCEMENT
The British Embassy telephone numbers will change on the morning of Monday 22 December 1997.
The new number is 5923100
The new fax number is 5923759
The direct number for the consular section is 5926581 and 5926586

Butler leaves empty-handed on issue of access to Iraqi palaces

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. chief weapons inspector Richard Butler, left Iraq on Tuesday without an agreement on access to presidential palaces as demanded by the Security Council.

A U.N. official said Mr. Butler held a final meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz before flying out to Bahrain, where the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq's support base. The UNSCOM chairman also briefed around 40 diplomats posted in Baghdad on the outcome of his four-day mission, following a similar meeting on Saturday, a diplomatic source said.

Iraq is barring UNSCOM inspectors from presidential palaces despite a Security Council call for full access, but it has eased curbs on access to other "sensitive" sites. Mr. Butler told a press conference late Monday.

"The Iraqi side insisted that we would never be able to inspect the presidential sites," he said.

But "we have agreed to a categorisation of sites within Iraq which ranges from normal to

sensitive, and then to presidential," said Mr. Butler, an Australian diplomat.

He voiced confidence that the agreement would give UNSCOM "an expanded range of possibilities" to inspect the sensitive sites, other than presidential palaces, for weapons secrets.

Iraq's ban on access to palaces was a "derogation from the [Security] Council's insistence that UNSCOM should be able to go anywhere, and at any time," said Mr. Butler.

Mr. Aziz told Mr. Butler, who is to report back to the Security Council on Thursday, that Iraq was prepared to "defend" its stand in front of the 15-nation Council.

The UNSCOM chief said he would return to Baghdad on Jan. 19 for more talks with Mr. Aziz "to see whether or not the Council has decided to accept Iraq's reservation on presidential sites."

"I expressed great doubt to Mr. Tariq Aziz that it would do so."

Citing U.S. threats of military action, Iraq refused to provide a list of its presidential sites on the grounds that "it might help those who want to bomb Iraq to

U.S. official says Iraq must allow inspections

BEIRUT (R) — U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Martin Indyk said on Tuesday Iraq must give U.N. arms inspectors free access to all areas, including presidential sites.

Mr. Indyk, on a tour of the Middle East focused on the Arab-Israeli peace process, said in response to questions about possible U.S. military action that the dispute was between Iraq and the United Nations.

"The United Nations has spoken very clearly on this matter in its most recent Resolution 1137 in which it makes clear that there must be free and unfettered access for UNSCOM to wherever it needs to go in order to implement its mandate, a mandate given by the United Nations Security Council."

"And that is a position that the United States supports and we would expect to see Iraq comply with the will of the international community," he said after talks with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi.

do so more precisely," Mr. Butler said.

The UNSCOM chief also said no progress was made in unravelling the secrets of Baghdad's biological weapons, but he declined to classify his mission as a failure.

"Am I satisfied in the sense that we have got everything resolved? Not really. We made good progress, but there are still some issues that need to be resolved," he said.

Mr. Butler said most of the progress was made in technical talks between Iraqi officials and

UNSCOM weapons experts.

Iraq's official press made no comment Tuesday on the end of Mr. Butler's mission, but the newspaper Babel run by President Saddam Hussein's son Uday kept up its references to the UNSCOM chief as a "mad dog."

A U.N. oil embargo in force against Baghdad since its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until UNSCOM has certified the elimination of Iraq's chemical and biological weapons as well as long-range missiles.

Russian co-pilot sole survivor of airplane crash in Sharjah

SHARJAH (AFP) — A Russian co-pilot who was the sole survivor of a Tajik charter plane crash that killed 85 people in the desert sands of this Gulf emirate was recovering in hospital here Tuesday.

While UAE authorities refused to speculate on the cause of the crash late Monday, an airline official said it may have been caused by a mid-air explosion.

Co-pilot Sergei Petrov, 37, was "getting better and can now talk," said a hospital official, adding that his condition was stable and he was out of danger. The crewman was the only non-Tajik on the plane.

A woman who was also pulled out of the wreckage of the Soviet-designed Tupolev-154 died on her way to hospital after the plane ploughed into the desert on its approach to Sharjah airport.

All 77 Tajik passengers and eight of the nine crew died, said civil aviation officials in Sharjah, a member of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) federation. The Russian news agency Interfax said three children were among the passengers.

Tajikistan declared Wednesday a day of mourning.

Tajik Prime Minister Yakhe Azimov said the government

would provide assistance to the families of the victims, while the national airline Tajikavia insisted its plane was well maintained.

One of the crash victims was Abdurakhmon Aliyev, managing director of the Leninabad (Khodzhen) aircraft factory which built the plane.

A Tajik team headed by Mirzo Mastangulov, head of Tajikavia, arrived in Sharjah on Tuesday to serve as "observers" in the investigation, said UAE civil aviation chief Mohammad Gath.

"Until now we have no indication of the causes of the accident and we do not want to get into the technical aspects in the absence of plausible clues," he told a press conference.

He hoped the co-pilot would help explain the crash. The investigation would start the next day and was expected to take four months.

Abdullah Ben Mohammad Al Thani, director of Sharjah civil aviation, said the plane's "black box" had been recovered from the wreckage strewn over a wide area of desert.

Witnesses said the cockpit was the only part of the plane relatively intact after the crash, which took place despite "excellent" weather conditions and without a

Mayday call being sent.

An airline official, asking not to be named, said the crash without a distress signal and over such flat terrain was "incomprehensible, unless there was an explosion on board."

Tajikavia officials quoted by the Russian news agency Interfax also said the plane was believed to have exploded in mid-air, at a height of about 600 metres.

At the scene of the crash around 12 kilometres from the airport, rescue workers worked through the night to sift through the wreckage after having recovered all the bodies.

"I saw the plane coming down fast before crashing into a sand dune. I ran to the site and saw the main part of the aircraft burning," said an oil worker who witnessed the crash.

"I never saw a more horrific sight," said a rescue official. "Charred bodies were lying all around amidst the wreckage including aircraft seats. I saw limbs and legs in some places. Some bodies were intact."

The charter ferrying shoppers on a six-day trip from Khodzhen in the north of Tajikistan disappeared from radar a few minutes before it was due to land in Sharjah.

U.S., Iran meet on Afghanistan

NEW YORK (AFP) — U.S. and Iranian officials have held low-key, direct contacts to find ways of ending the civil war in Afghanistan, the New York Times reported Monday.

The reported meetings came as U.S. and Iranian leaders traded warm words over the past two days about opening a dialogue between the two countries. "We are hoping that the Iranians will play a constructive role in bringing their influence to bear to see the fighting stop and negotiations begin for the establishment of a broad-based government in Afghanistan,"

Karl Inderfurth, assistant secretary of state for South Asian affairs, told the Times. Mr. Inderfurth, who has met with Iranian officials at the United Nations, left Sunday on a trip to London, Paris and Moscow to discuss Afghanistan. The Afghan discussions — which also include Russia, and Afghanistan's neighbours Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Pakistan and China — began several months ago, after the election of Iran's President Mohammad Khatami. Mr. Inderfurth said. The discussion group is headed by Algeria's former foreign affairs minister Lakhdar Brahimi.

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OCCASIONS FOR ALL COLOURS: Afrikaners watch as a ray of sun shines on a symbolic marble tomb at midday Tuesday inside the Voortrekker Monument in Pretoria. The monument was built as a vow to God by 530 Afrikaners who defeated 10,000 Zulu warriors in a bloody battle on Dec. 16, 1838. After the victory Afrikaners made Dec. 16, 'The Day Of The Vow' a holiday until the abolition of apartheid, when it became 'Day Of Reconciliation' as part of an attempt to turn holidays observed separately by whites and blacks into multi-racial occasions (AP photo)

Turkey threatens to derail Cyprus peace in EU row

BRUSSELS (AFP) —

Turkey on Tuesday issued its clearest warning yet that it will derail the Cyprus peace process in retaliation for being excluded from the European Union's enlargement plans.

At talks with his NATO counterparts here, Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem said Ankara would proceed with the "partial integration" of the Turkish-controlled north of the island if the EU starts membership negotiations with the internationally recognised Greek Cypriot government next spring.

"I think that is a process that will be on its way," Mr. Cem said when asked about Turkey's likely reaction if the EU acted on a commitment it made at a summit in Luxembourg on Saturday.

The foreign minister however distanced himself from threats by some Turkish politicians that they could block the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland's entry to NATO by refusing to ratify the expansion next year.

"The government has committed itself to NATO expansion. Unlike the EU, we keep to our engagements," he said.

Mr. Cem said the move on Cyprus would provide for much closer economic, political and military ties between Turkey and the ethnic Turkish community on Cyprus, but would fall short of full annexation.

A senior Turkish official in Ankara, however, told AFP that this option had not been ruled out.

"In the Cyprus question, there can be several scenarios," the official in Ankara said, speaking on condition of anonymity. "From a Turkish

view point, the best scenario would be that the EU opens negotiations in March with Cyprus and freezes them immediately after realising that membership is impossible so long as the island is divided."

He added: "The worst case scenario would be that the EU goes ahead no matter what with membership plans for the Greek part of Cyprus and in this case, the integration process of Northern Cyprus with Turkey would be completed. In the worst case, it could lead to annexation."

Such steps would effectively scupper current U.N.-led efforts to broker a permanent solution to the Cyprus problem based on the creation of a bizonal, bicomunal federation and destroy the island's chances of entering the EU.

Several EU states, including Germany, have made it clear that they will not allow the republic of Cyprus to join without a lasting settlement with the north.

Mr. Cem said he was "not optimistic" about the chances of this happening as long as the international community refused to recognise the north. "You cannot form a federation between a 'community' and a 'republic'," he said.

At their weekend summit, EU leaders said for the first time that Turkey was "eligible" for membership but refused to include it in the enlargement negotiations due to begin with ten central European states and Cyprus next March.

In an attempt to soften the blow, they offered Turkey a place in a new pan-European conference to be launched in parallel with but — at the

insistence of Germany and Greece — separate from the enlargement process.

Mr. Cem accused the EU of offering Turkey a "third class" ticket which it could obtain only if it agreed to the "unacceptable" conditions of allowing the negotiations with Cyprus to proceed with no reaction.

"It seems to me that the EU has really made a mess of this question. It has put itself in the middle of a very complicated problem."

He reiterated that Ankara would not take up its seat in the new conference. "For the time being, in our political relations, the EU has downgraded itself in our political agenda," Mr. Cem said. Despite the tough stance adopted on Cyprus, Mr. Cem made it clear Turkey did not want to completely sever its relations with western Europe by refusing to repeat the threats of some Turkish politicians on NATO expansion.

He also gave a hint of a possible way out of the current standoff.

"I don't believe something can be done in the very near future but I hope the EU reconsiders its position and finds the means, and I emphasise means, to ensure that this misunderstanding does not last very long."

The emphasis on "means" appeared to be a reference to the \$415 million of aid Turkey was due to receive to help it adapt to the introduction of a customs union with the EU.

The customs union has been in force in January 1996 but Greece has repeatedly blocked the release of the funds because of its bilateral disputes with the Turks.

Bethlehem mayor urges Pope to stay away from millennium celebrations

BETHLEHEM (AFP) —

The mayor of Bethlehem called on Pope John Paul II Tuesday to stay away from the Holy Land during the 2000 jubilee of Christ's birth because of Israel's occupation of Arab east Jerusalem.

"I don't advise the Pope to visit until the political situation in Jerusalem is solved," said Hanna Nasser, the Palestinian mayor of Bethlehem which Christian tradition considers the birthplace of Jesus.

Briefing foreign reporters on the city's preparations for this year's Christmas celebrations and the 2000 jubilee, Mr. Nasser said he personally urged the Pope at a meeting near Rome in September to avoid the Holy Land for now and the pontiff agreed.

"I don't think there is any chance of his coming if Jerusalem is under Israeli rule," he said.

Mr. Nasser added that the Palestinians welcomed other religious leaders for the jubilee celebrations. "But the Pope as the head of a state, the Vatican, is different," he said, asserting that a papal visit would lend legitimacy to Israel's claim of sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem.

Israel occupied the Arab eastern sector of Jerusalem in 1967.

PNA to screen access for more devout Christmas

BETHLEHEM (AP) — Trying to give Christmas celebrations a more religious tone this year, Palestinian police will screen access to Manger Square and mainly allow in pilgrims and local Christians, the mayor of Jesus' birthplace said Tuesday. In the last two years, since the end of Israeli occupation in December 1995, Christmas had been as much a celebration of Palestinian nationalism as a religious holiday, with Manger Square decked out in Palestinian flags and posters of Yasser Arafat. "National feelings were on top of all celebrations, but I think this year, it will be a much more religious celebration," Mayor Hanna Nasser told a foreign press association news conference.

Under the Oslo peace accords, Israel and the Palestinians are to reach agreement on the final status of all the occupied territories by May 1999.

The Palestinians want the negotiations to yield an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat has said he will unilaterally declare a state in 1999 if talks with Israel prove fruitless.

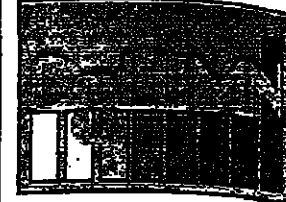
But Israel has made clear it will not yield sovereignty over Arab east Jerusalem. Palestinians were angered in November by an agreement signed between Israel and the Vatican officially recognising Roman Catholic institutions in Arab east Jerusalem. Palestinian Religious

Affairs Minister Hassan Tahub called the deal a "stab in the back" for Palestinians and the Palestinian legislature issued a formal protest.

But the Vatican issued statements saying the agreement with Israel was "technical" and did not alter the Church's official position of refusing to recognise Israel's annexation of Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Nasser said he accepted the Vatican view.

Both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) are preparing for a massive influx of tourists and pilgrims for the year 2000, focusing on the northern Israeli city of Nazareth — where Jesus spent his youth. Jerusalem and Bethlehem.



Miami man learns how not to rob a bank

MIAMI BEACH (R) — Todd Boucino learned a few lessons about the art of robbing a bank: don't plan to hail a taxi to make your getaway, and don't pick a bank one block from the local police headquarters. A police spokesman said Boucino walked into a Nationsbank branch, located just down the road from the precinct station, and told a teller "give me all the money." The teller fled and Boucino helped himself to the cash. Outside, a passing police officer heard the commotion and put out the alert. Running out of the bank, Boucino frantically tried to flag down a taxi but the driver refused to take him. Boucino then fled, chased by a parade of officers, and managed to stop a cab in another street, but was finally caught as he was climbing in.

French deputies given joints in legalisation bid

PARIS (R) — A group advocating the decriminalisation of marijuana said it sent a hand-rolled joint to every member of the National Assembly along with a letter urging an easing of France's tough drug laws. "This legislation, the most repressive in Europe, has done nothing to halt the massive spread of drugs, nor has it slowed the appetite of a certain number of our fellow citizens for illegal substances," the Paris-based Collective for Information and Research on Cannabis wrote. Communist deputy Alain Bocquet jokingly complained that he felt "ostracised" because he had not yet received his gift while hard-rightist Philippe de Villiers denounced the move as "a despicable publicity stunt."

Jumper to be made from cloned sheep's wool

LONDON (AFP) — A jumper is to be knitted with wool sheared from Dolly, the sheep which made history by being the first animal to be cloned from the cell of an adult animal, The Times reported. Technologists at Leeds University, in northern England, have transformed 2.5 kg of high-quality fleece from Dolly into wool. The Cystic Fibrosis Trust charity, which auctioned the first fleece to be sheared from the 17-month old sheep, has launched a competition to design a jumper from Dolly's wool, which will be knitted at the university. After being modelled, the jumper will go on display at the Science Museum in London.

Charles as Spice Girls' new manager?

LONDON (AP) — It was a night for princes and Spice Girls. Prince William and his brother Prince Harry took their friends to meet the five Spices before the world premiere of the female rock group's first movie, "Spice World." The young princes' father, heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles, was also on hand and Ginger Spice Geri Halliwell offered him a new job. "Charles is our new manager," Geri quipped. "I am very expensive," Charles retorted.

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